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Letters to a Friend;

CONTAINING
AN UNANSWERABLE VINDICATION
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

FROM THE
IMPUTATION of POPERY and SUPERSTITION,
AND
Reasons against the Repeal of the Test Laws.

INCLUDING
A DEFENCE of the PARLIAMENTARY SPEECHES of the
Right Honourable FREDERICK LORD NORTH, (now EARL
of GUILDFORD) and the Right Honourable Mr. PITT, for
the CONTINUANCE of the TEST ACTS, in STRICTURES
made on a PAMPHLET, just published, AGAINST THEM,
by A MASTER of ARTS, of the University of OXFORD.

“ ———— ’Αρχαία ’Εἴη κρατεῖται.”

“ ———— Let antient Customs still take Place.”

Concil. Nic. Can. 6.

By A CHAPLAIN OF THE NAVY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

L O N D O N :

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To the PUBLIC.

BEFORE, and since, the subject of the *Test Laws* was under the discussion of Parliament, in 1789, several popular writers, in the dissenting interest, have renewed the ridiculous and absurd cant of their *saints*, in the last century, and publicly declared that among *their* people it is still considered as *sinful* to hold any *religious* communion with the *Church of England*. Like their fathers of *Hudibrastic* memory, they accuse us of *Popery*—in our Church Government by *Bishops*—in our *Liturgy*—in our *kneeling* at the *Sacrament*, &c.

In an age and a nation like this, so brightly illuminated by the lights of Phi-

losophy and Religion, one might expect better things from our Sectarian *Literati*, than such wild, incredible, preposterous assertions as these. What sect in Europe, of the Reformed Churches, *our* DISSENTERS *alone excepted*, but will readily allow the Established Church of England to be the grand pillar of *Protestantism*, “The Eye of the Reformed Churches” as Signior *Diodati* calls her?—And Monsieur *Daille*, though not partial to her, says, “As to the *Church of England*, purified as she is, from all foreign, wicked, superstitious worship and errors, either impious or dangerous, by the rule of the divine Scriptures—approved by so many and such illustrious *martyrs*—abounding with piety towards God and charity towards *men*, and with such numerous examples of good works—flourishing with an increase of most *learned* and *wise* men, from the beginning of the *Reformation* to the present time—I have always had it in high *esteem*, and, till I die, I shall always continue in the same high *veneration*”

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tion of it.—In the same strain of panegyric do all foreign Protestants speak of our Church. How then shall we account for the inveterate and unjust aversion of our own religious *malcontents* to her? I begin to think, that as *offences must come*, and all the favourites of heaven may depend, in this life, upon *trials* of one kind or other, the *Almighty* hath decreed them to surround our *Church*, in the shape of *Dissenters*, and means to continue them as “a thorn in the side” of his darling church, whom he hath exalted so pre-eminently, in purity and perfection, above all others, to keep up her vigilance, and give constant exercise to her virtues, her *graces*, and her gifts; as He thought proper to do with St. Paul, after He had honoured him with a view of the *third heaven*. In no other way, indeed, but on this, or some such supposition, will Christian charity permit us to account for the obstinate perseverance of our present *Dissenters* in all their old calumnies, prejudices, and pre-

possessions. Such a blindness and infatuation, in this enlightened *era*, seems to be really *judicial*, like that of the *Jews*. For, like these people, our *Dissenters* “have got eyes, but they *will not* see—ears, but they *will not* hear”—heads, but they *will not* understand—and “hearts, but they *will not* feel.”

This must certainly be their unhappy case. They never else would presume to publish such gross falsehoods, respecting our Church, as they have lately done. They must have forgot, or they imagine their people have never heard of, the many compleat and very humiliating defeats, every sect of every name among them, received from our learned *divines* of the last, and the earlier part of this, century. However, lest their own illiterate and unfortunate votaries may implicitly believe them, in these base assertions, as they do in other matters—lest ignorant infidels, and men of heretical principles, may be otherwise confirmed
in

in their impious sentiments and contempt of our Church—and lest even some weak and thoughtless people of our communion, may be insensibly deluded to adopt their *system of religion*, from an infatuated admiration of their *political tenets*—I think it a duty I owe the Church, *though I never did, nor do enjoy, any of her favors*, to do all I can, *in my present situation*, to vindicate her from the impeachment brought against her, by these dissenting traducers.

For this purpose, I have compiled these Letters from the writings of our own *divines*, men of the greatest erudition and piety, luminaries of the first magnitude in the Ecclesiastical hemisphere ornaments; to England as subjects, and to religion as ministers.

It is very far from my wishes or intention, by this publication, to renew a religious paper war, between the members of our Church, and those who dissent
from

from the Constitution of her Government, &c. But, surely, when her character is so wantonly attacked, every man within her sacred pale, should be enabled to wipe off such contamination: he should be enabled “always to give an answer to every one that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him,” and to shew that he has not taken up his religion upon trust, as most part of our *sectarians* do, but from principles of reason and self-conviction.

And what can be a more proper mode of capacitating him to do this, than to *select* and set before him, in one clear and ample view, all the various reasons and arguments which are necessary to vindicate the Articles of his Faith, and the several parts of the Church Service, that he may be able, at any time, in conversational dispute with Non-conformists, of every denomination, to support with advantage, the merits of the good cause he is engaged in.

Such

"Such a *selection* I have here begun ; and if this specimen is honored with a favorable reception from our *clergy* and *laity*, I propose to publish, in a short time, another small volume or two. *Selections* of a similar kind, from our best *Poets* and *Philosophers*, have been universally bought up by our people of learning and taste : and I know no reason why there should not be an equally great demand, for *selections* from our *Bishops*, and most celebrated Church divines, in every family of rank, or of common station, who are not fashionable enough to laugh at *religious books*.

To the learned, these Letters want the charm of *originality*---But may I not flatter myself they will forgive that *want*, for the sake of their good intention and general utility ? I have, indeed, no merit in this performance---I claim none---not more, at least, than that man has a right to, who, on the appearance of his nation's danger, brings forth from her armory

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mory, a train of her best artillery, and seasonably and properly points it against the disturbers of her peace.

If it is thought I have any where expressed myself with an improper warmth against the *Dissenters*, I hope it will be considered that I am writing against *principles* and *practices*, not against *persons*. I wish not to *wound*, but to *heal*. And, in endeavoring to do this, if I appear, at any time, to be too sanguine, it is intreated the Reader will reflect, and he will then confess, that even the most tender physician, when the application of all his fine *balms* and *emollients* rather festers than cures---*must*, though with reluctance, use his *caustic* and *saw*.

LET-

LETTER I.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE subject of this Letter shall be *historic proofs* of the regular succession of *Bishops*, in the Church, instituted by our SAVIOUR and his *apostles*, and of their superiority of *order* and *authority*, to the order of *Presbyters*, &c. I wish to make you able to defend this part of theological dispute, and treat with that pity they deserve, the ignorance and obstinacy of those who oppose us in it.

No Dissenter of learning and candor will deny, that when the *apostles* left *Jerusalem*, the Mother Church of CHRIST, to live apart, and propagate the Gospel through the world, *James*, whom some call the son of *Alpheus*, and one of the twelve apostles; others, the son of *Joseph*, the husband of *Mary*, by a former wife, but whom all acknowledge to be

be our LORD's kinsman, was appointed *Bishop* of this city.

Whether this was done by our LORD's express order, when he appeared to *James*, apart from the rest, after his resurrection*, or by the free election of the *apostles*, is not agreed. However, it is universally allowed by all the *ancient fathers*, that this *James* was the *first Bishop* of *Jerusalem*. On this account, they distinguish him by the high titles of *Bishop of Bishops—Prince of Bishops—Bishop of the Apostles—Prince of the Apostles*—with other exalted appellations. The catalogue of the *Bishops* of *Jerusalem*, which are extant in the first Christian writers, do all place *James* at the head of them. The *throne* too, or the *episcopal* chair, wherein he used to teach the people, was still preserved, and had in great veneration, when *Eusebius* wrote his History, which was in the former part of the fourth century after CHRIST†.

Though the *Scriptures* do not expressly mention his promotion, they give us many

* 1 Cor. xv. 7.

† Euseb. Lib. iii. cap. 1. Lib. vii. cap. 19. Chrysost. Homil. 38.—In Epist. 1. ad Corinth.—Epiphan. Hæres. ix. pag. 119.—Clementis Constit. et Epist. et Recognit.—Rufinus, &c.

proofs of his being the head of the Church of Jerusalem, after the other apostles began to leave that place. It is remarkable, that, in the first five chapters of the *Acts*, when *Peter* is constantly spoken of as the chief *apostle*, and principal person in the Church of *Jerusalem*, there is nothing afterwards said of him which implies any thing of that character.

For from the 12th chapter of that book, which is the first place where *James* is mentioned with any character of distinction, he is always described as the chief person at *Jerusalem*, even when *Peter* was present. When *Peter* was delivered by the angel out of prison, he desires some of the disciples to *go shew these things*, that is, what had happened to himself, to *James*, as the *head* of the Church, and the *brethren*, that is, the rest of the Church*. At another time, when *Paul* arrived at *Jerusalem*, from his travels in preaching the Gospel to foreign countries, being desirous of giving an account to the Church of his success, *the day following he went in unto James*, as the Bishop of that city; and *all the elders*, who were next in authority to him, *were present*†.

* *Acts* xii. 17.

† *Ibid.* xxi. 18.

In the *Synod*, which was held at *Jerusalem*, about the great question, "Whether the converts from *Gentilism* should be circumcised?" *Peter* delivers his judgment, as one who was a member of the assembly; but *James* speaks with authority, and his sentence is decisive.* The name of *James* is placed by St. *Paul* before *Peter* and *John*—*James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars*†. And some of the church of *Jerusalem*, who came to *Antioch*, are said to be certain who came from *James*‡; which implies that *James* was the head of that church, otherwise they should rather have been said, to come from *Jerusalem*, or from the church of that place. From all these circumstances, it appears that *James* was the Bishop of *Jerusalem*—before the *Apostles* left it,—and had the particular care and government of the church in that metropolis committed to him by *CHRIST*, or by the *Apostles*.

After the death of *James*, the surviving *apostles, disciples, and kinsmen* of our *LORD*, assembled together at *Jerusalem*, and ordained

* Hefychius Hierosol. Loc. Citat. πετρος δὲ ἀρχιεπίσκοπος καὶ ἰακώβος ἐπισκοπος—Acts xv. 13, 19.

† Gal. ii. 9.

‡ Ibid. ii. 12.

Simeon,

Simeon, the son of *Cleophas*, mentioned in *St. John's Gospel**, to be his successor. *Simeon* presided in that church till the time of *Trajan*, as we learn from *Hegeſippus*, who was a diligent ſearcher into the practice of the *Apoſtles* and their *Disciples*, and lived in the next age after them †: and after *Simeon* there ſucceeded thirteen *Biſhops* of the *Jewiſh* race, before the final exciſion of the *Jews* by *Adrian*, whoſe names *Eusebius* has inſerted into his hiſtory from the antient monuments of the church ‡.

And there are many examples in other churches of men ſucceeding in the apoſtolic or chief order, before the *Canon* of Scripture was finiſhed. Beſides *Epaphroditus*, whom *St. Paul* calls the *Apoſtle*§, and the ancient fathers affirm to have been *Biſhop* of the *Philippians*—and others, whom *St. Paul* calls *Apoſtles*, and the ancient fathers do, for that reaſon, ſpeak of as *Biſhops of the churches*||, we have a remarkable example in *Timothy*, who was *Biſhop*, or chief governor of the church of *Ephesus*, planted by *St. Paul*.

* John xix. 25.

† Euseb. Ecclef. Hiſt. Lib. iii. cap. 17, and 32.

‡ Euseb. Ecclef. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 5.

§ Philip. ii. 25.

|| 2 Cor. viii. 23.

The authority which *Timothy* exercised in this church, was not conferred on him by any vote or agreement of the people, but by the imposition of *St. Paul's* hands *. By virtue of this authority he ruled the whole church of *Ephesus*, *Ministers* as well as private *Christians*, in the same manner as the *Apostles* used to do. He was impowered to *command and teach* those under his care †: to make rules for the orderly celebration of divine worship ‡: to hinder *women* from speaking in the public assemblies ||: to see that the *teachers taught no doctrine but what they had received* from our LORD and his *apostles* §: to *commit* the doctrines of the Gospel to *faithful men* who should be able to teach others ¶; and to ordain some of those whom he found duly qualified to be *Bishops* and *deacons* **: and he was to judge of mens' abilities, and fitness for these offices, whence he is exhorted to *lay hands suddenly on no man* ††;

* 2 Tim. i. 6. 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

† 1 Tim. iv. 11.

‡ Ibid. ii. 1.

|| Ibid. ii. 11, 12.

§ Ibid. i. 3.

¶ 2 Tim. iii. 2.

** 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2, &c.

†† Ibid. v. 22.

which

which would have been unreasonable, if he had not power to reject the unworthy. He was also authorised to take care that a competent maintenance should be provided, and all due *honor* paid to the Church *officers**; to exercise Ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and to take cognizance of accusations, not only against private Christians, but even against the *elders*; though in this latter case, where the Church's honor was more highly concerned, he was to proceed with more caution: *against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses*†; and, if to take cognizance of accusations, consequently to inflict censures proportionably to the crimes proved against them. Accordingly it follows; *Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before GOD, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality*‡.

Here is an entire account of almost all the parts of the *apostolic* authority, as it was to be exercised by Timothy, whom the ancient fa-

* 1 Tim. v. 17.

† 1 Tim. v. 19.

‡ 1 Tim. v. 20, 21.

thers constantly call the Bishop of Ephesus; and the Bishops of that See are called his *successors*; and twenty-seven of them are allowed to have been derived from him in a continued line of succession, at the celebration of the Great Council of Chalcedon*.

The same authority which Timothy had at Ephesus, was exercised in the Churches of Crete by Titus, whence the *antient fathers* often call him the Bishop of Crete. He was ordained and appointed to this *office*, not by the people's choice, but by St. Paul, who converted the Cretians to the Christian faith†; and by virtue of this appointment, he was empowered to *teach* all degrees of men, and to *exhort*, and *rebuke* them *with authority*‡; to take cognizance of *heretics*, and to *reject* from his own and the Church's communion, such of them as did not repent upon the se-

* Hieronymus Comment. in Galat. i. 19. Paullatim, tempore procedente, et alii ab his, quos Dominus elegerat, ordinati sunt Apostoli: sicut ille ad Philipenses sermo declarat, dicens, *necessarium ex-istimavi Epaphrōditum*, &c. Theodoretus in Philip. i. 1. Σαφῶς τοίνυν ἐδίδασκεν, ὡς ἐπισκοπικὴν διοίκησιν αὐτὸς ἐπισπιστεύει ἔχειν Ἀποστόλου προσηγορίαν.—Concil. Chalced. Act. 2. Tom 4. Ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου Τιμοθέου μέχρι νῦν εἰκοσιεπτά ἐπισκοποὶ ἐγένοντο, πάντες ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἐργετομένησαν. Conf. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. Lib. iii. Cap. 4.—Photius Bibliothec. Cod. 254.—Chrysostom. aliique in Epist. ad Timotheum et Titum.

† Tit. i. 5.

‡ Ibid. ii, 1, 2, 151

cond admonition*; to *set in order* whatever St. Paul had *left wanting*†; and to *ordain* those whom he himself should approve, to be *Bishops* and *elders*‡.

Neither are these the only examples, which are to be found in the Scripture, of single persons invested with *apostolic* or *episcopal* authority. For St. John, in the three first chapters of his Revelation, has given us a lively description of seven Bishops, who presided in the seven principal cities of the proconsular Asia.

Our LORD is there introduced sending seven Epistles to the seven Churches of these cities, directed to the *seven angels* of the Churches, whom he calls, *The seven stars in his right hand*§. Now if it appears that the *seven angels* were so many single persons invested with supreme authority in the Seven Churches, there can be no reason to doubt, whether they were the Bishops of these Churches—a Bishop being nothing else but *one* who has the chief authority in the Church.

Let us examine, in the first place, whether the *seven angels* were so many single persons.

* Tit. iii. 10.

† Ibid. i. 5, 6.

‡ Tit. i. 5.

§ Rev. i. 16, 20, and ii. 1.

And first of all it is quite clear they were not the whole Church, or collective body of Christians in their several cities; because the Churches are represented by *seven candlesticks*, which are all along distinguished from the *seven stars* which are emblems of the *angels*. Neither were they any select number or body of men: for they are always mentioned as single persons; *The angel of the Church of Ephesus*—*The angel of the Church of Smyrna*; and so the rest. And if in the Epistle to Thyatira instead of (τῷ γυναικί Ιεζεβήλ) *the woman Jezebel*, we read (τῷ γυναικί σὺ Ιεζεβήλ) *thy wife Jezebel**, as it is in St. Cyprian†, the Syriac version, the Alexandrian, and several other manuscript copies: then the *angel* of Thyatira was a married man, and consequently but *one* person. Accordingly both he and all the rest are constantly addressed in the singular number—I *know thy works*; *I have a few things against thee*—*Remember how thou hast heard*—*Thou hast kept the word of my patience*. So in the others, where our LORD speaks to them in particular. But when what he writes, equally concerns the *people*, he changes his stile, and speaks in the plural.

* Rev. ii. 20.

† Epist. 55. ad Antonianum.

The devil shall cast some of you into prison : Thou hast not denied my faith when Antipas my faithful martyr was slain among you† : I will reward every one of you according to your works ‡. That which ye have, hold fast till I come.*

This variation of the number, is a plain argument, that some parts of these Epistles relate to the whole Churches, and others only to the persons of the angels.

There is only one exception made to this observation, which is, that the *angel* of Thyatira is once spoken of in the plural number.

The passage where this is supposed to be done, runs thus :—*I will cast her (Jezebel) into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her, into great tribulation. And I will kill her children with death, and all the Churches shall know, that I am He which searcheth the reins and the hearts ; and I will give every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest of Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine (of Jezebel) I will put upon you none other burthen ||.*

* Rev. ii. 10.

† Ibid. ii. 13.

‡ Verse 23.

§ Verse 25.

|| Rev. ii. 22, 23, 24.

In these words, *Unto you I say, and unto the rest of Thyatira*, you is taken for the *angel*; and *the rest* for the *people* of Thyatira. Some answer this objection by referring *you* not to the angel of Thyatira, but to the Churches mentioned in the preceding verse. Then the sense will be, *But unto you*, the fore-mentioned Churches, *I say, and to the rest of Thyatira*, who have not been corrupted by Jezebel. Neither is it strange that the other six Churches should be addressed in the Epistle directed to Thyatira; since the seven Epistles were not sent severally to each Church, but addressed together, in one common Epistle to all the seven. Thus we find in the beginning; *John to the seven Churches of Asia**. And they are afterwards mentioned together, thus:—*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches*†. So that it is far more probable, the other Churches should be spoken of in this passage, than that the *angel* of Thyatira should be addressed in the *plural* number, contrary to what is done in all other places. However, if this explication should be thought forced, we need only leave out the conjunctive particle (*καὶ*,) and the words will then

* Rev. i. 4.

† Ibid. ii. 11, 17, 29.

read thus: ὑμῖν δὲ λέγω τοῖς λοιποῖς ἐν Θυατείροις)
To you the rest (i. e. to the rest of you) in Thyatira
I say, meaning those who had withstood Jezebel. This way of reading it is followed by the vulgar Latin, the Syriac, Æthiopic, and Arabic versions, the Alexandrian manuscript, another of Curcellæus's, two of Beza's, and several others. And it makes the sense very easy and natural: for our LORD having before severely threatened Jezebel and her disciples, it was very natural for him to add, as a comfort and encouragement to the faithful Christians — *But to the rest of you in Thyatira*, whom Jezebel has not been able to seduce, *I say, I will lay no other burthen upon you*. So that notwithstanding this exception, we may safely understand the seven angels to be seven single persons.

But there is one thing yet behind which will put this matter beyond dispute; and that is, the titles of *angels* and *stars* are always applied in this book of Revelation to *single* men. Our LORD is called the *Morning Star**, and the *Sun*†. The apostles are called the *twelve stars*‡, and twelve angels§. But there is not

* Rev. ii. 28. and xxii. 16.

† Rev. xii. 1.

‡ Ibid. xii. 1.

§ Ibid. xxi. 12, 14.

one example where these titles are given to any society or number of men. If, therefore, we will allow the divine author of this book to speak in this place as he does in all others, the *angels* of the *seven Churches* can be none but *single* persons.

The next thing to be made out is, that these *single persons* were men of *supreme* authority in their several Churches. And we might safely conclude they were so, though we had no other proof of it, because our LORD has directed to them, and only them, the Epistles which he designed for the use of their Churches. We find it was usual, all the world over, in Cyprian's time, to direct the letters which were designed to be read in any church, to their *Bishop*, he being the person by whom all *ecclesiastical* affairs were transacted. But there are several other arguments which prove that the angels were men of eminent station and authority: for though the Churches are only called *candlesticks*, the *angels* are resembled to *stars*, which give light to the *candlesticks*. This is a very fit emblem of those who succeeded the apostles, whom our LORD calls *The light of the world*, and resembles to *candles*, which being put into candlesticks,

candlesticks, *give light to all who are in the house**. On which account they are elsewhere called *stars* in the Revelation, as was before observed; and the same title is given to our LORD himself, who is the light supreme, or great *light of the world†*. Their other name of *angels* is never given to any, but such as are placed in some high office or dignity under God. The *angels* of God are the blessed spirits, who always live in his presence, and execute his commands. The Jews called their high priest by this name, because they looked on *him* as GOD's *messenger* to them‡. Our LORD himself is called the *Angel of the Covenant§*, and his apostles, whom he left to declare the will of God to his Church, were also stiled *angels* in the Revelation, as has already been observed. Indeed the names of angel and apostle are almost synonymous words; both signify the *messengers* of God: only this of apostle more expressly denotes his *sending*, or *commissioning* them to do a *message* in his name; and that of *angel* implies the

* Matt. v. 14, 15.

† John i. 5. 9.

‡ Diodorus Siculus apud Photium Bibliothec. Cod. 224. Αρχιερεῖς τούτων προσαγορεύονται, καὶ νομίζουσιν αὐτοῖς ἀγγέλων γενέσθαι τῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ πραγμάτων.

§ Malach. iii. 1.

telling or declaring that message. So that this is a very fit name for those who succeeded the apostles in their office of preaching God's will to the Church. And if we proceed from the names, to the characters, of the *seven angels*, as we have them in the Revelation, we shall soon discover several other marks of their authority. They are praised for all the good, and blamed for all the evil, which happened in their Churches. The angel of Ephesus is commended, because he *could not bear them that were evil*, and had *tried them who called themselves apostles and were not so**; which seems to imply, that he had judicially convicted them to be impostors. And the angel of Pergamos is reproved for *having them who hold the doctrine of Balaam*, that is, the *Nicolaitans*, who allowed themselves to *commit fornication*, and to *eat things sacrificed to idols*; and he is severely threatened, unless he *repented†*. This proves he had authority to correct those disorders, otherwise he could not justly have been punished for them. The same may be said of the *angel of Thyatira*, who is blamed for *suffering Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce the*

* Rev. ii. 2.

† Verses 14, 15, 16.

people*. And the angel of Sardis is commanded to be *watchful*, and to *strengthen* those that are *ready to die*; otherwise our LORD threatens to *come on him as a thief*, at an hour which he should *not know*†; plainly alluding to what he says in the Gospels to 'his *stewards*; that is, his *apostles*, and other *ministers*, whom he made *rulers* over his *household*, the Church‡.

So that the *angels* of the seven Churches having appeared to be single persons invested with chief authority, we need not scruple to call them with St. Austin, in one of his Homilies on the Revelation, and with other ancient fathers, *Episcopos sive Præpositos Ecclesiarum*, the *Bishops* or *Presidents* of the Churches.

It will be a farther confirmation of the Episcopal authority of the *seven angels* in their several Churches, if it be shewn from the most early accounts of the primitive Church, that Bishops were settled in all these Seven Churches, at or near the time when this Epistle was sent to them.

* Rev. ii. 20.

† Ibid. iii. 2, 3.

‡ Matt. xxiv. 44, 45.

Luke. xii. 42.

Irenæus* and Eusebius† inform us, that this Epistle, with the rest of the Revelation, was written towards the end of Domitian's reign, when St. John lived in exile, on the island of Patmos. And we are told, that in a very short time after Domitian's death, being recalled from banishment by Nerva, he went to Ephesus, and took upon him the care of the church of that city, in the presence of *Seven Bishops* ‡.

I will not affirm that these *Seven Bishops* presided in the *Seven Churches* we are speaking of; though many think they did; both because the numbers agree, and all these *Seven Churches* lay within the proconsular Asia, whereof Ephesus was the metropolis. But, at any rate, we may very safely pronounce, that if Bishops were settled at that time in the other cities of the same country, there is no reason to think these *Seven Churches*, every one of which was in a city of note, were without Bishops.

To come at once to particulars, I think it can scarce be doubted, but there was a Bishop

* Iren. adv. Hæres. Lib. 5. Cap. 30.

† Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 3. Cap. 18.

‡ Martyrium S. Timothei apud. Photium Bibliothec. Cod. 254.

in Ephesus, when the Revelation was written. For in the next age after this, Polycrates, who was born within a short time after St. John's death, is well known to have been Bishop of Ephesus. But to come nearer to the time we are talking of, Ignatius, who suffered martyrdom, about the 10th year of Trajan, which at the most, was not above twelve years after St. John returned from Patmos, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, speaks of Onesimus, their Bishop, whom he exhorts all of them, Presbyters and Deacons, as well as private Christians, to obey. And to carry this account still higher, Timothy was made Bishop of Ephesus by St. Paul; and there was an uninterrupted succession of twenty-seven Bishops from him to the great council of Chalcedon, as was before proved from the public *acts* of that council. So that here was a Bishop mentioned a little before the Revelation was written; and again, not long after, beside a constant succession of many Bishops from the foundation of this church, for several ages after.

If we proceed to the rest of the *Seven Churches*, we find, that not long after St. John's time, Sagaris was Bishop of Laodicea.

He

He is mentioned by the above Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, in his Epistle to Victor*, as one who suffered martyrdom in the *past* times; that is, when Servilius Paulus was Proconsul of Asia; as we learn from Melito's Tract about Easter, who was himself Bishop of Sardis in the reign of Marcus Aurelius †. And if the old Roman Martyrology may be believed, Sagaris was one of St. Paul's disciples: so that very near the time I write of, we find a Bishop in Laodicea; and, not long after this, another in Sardis.

When Ignatius wrote his Epistle to the Philadelphians, they had a Bishop, whose gravity, modesty, and other virtues, Ignatius commends, and exhorts the Philadelphians to be dutiful to him.

The old Roman Martyrology speaks of Carpus, Bishop of Thyatira, who suffered martyrdom under Antoninus, who was Emperor in the next age after the Revelation was written.

If the Commentary of Arethas on the Revelation may be credited, Antipas, whom our

* Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 5. Cap. 24.

† Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 4. Cap. 26.

LORD calls his *faithful martyr**, was Bishop of Pergamus.

If we may judge of the rest by the church of Smyrna, (and there is no reason why we should not, since the *angel* of this city is not described as different from the rest) we shall no longer doubt, whether they were governed by Bishops, in this first age of Christianity; it being certain, that Polycarp, whom all parties allow to have conversed with the Apostles, was Bishop of Smyrna. He is so called by Polycrates in his above-mentioned Epistle to Victor, who was thirty-eight years old when Polycarp suffered martyrdom, and therefore is a witness without exception. The same title is also given him by the church of Smyrna, in their Epistle concerning his martyrdom, which is still to be seen in Eusebius.† Ignatius too, his cotemporary, who wrote an Epistle to Polycarp, and another to the church of Smyrna, not only calls him Bishop of Smyrna, but exhorts all the church of Smyrna, Presbyters and Deacons, as well as Laymen, to be obedient to him. I shall only add that Irenæus, who was Polycarp's disciple, assures us that he was ordained Bishop of Smyrna, by

* Rev. ii. 23.

† Euseb. Hist. Lib. 4. Cap. 12.

the Apostles*. Surely here is sufficient evidence for the presiding of Bishops in those *Seven Churches*, in, or soon after the time, in which the Revelation was written; and indeed more than could well have been expected from the short few and imperfect accounts which are left us of the Church, in that early period of her existence.

If we descend from the Scriptures to the most early records of the next ages, we shall find that the succession of Bishops was preserved in all churches, whereof we have any account.

Let us begin with Ignatius. He suffered martyrdom about the tenth year of Trajan, which was only about four years after the death of St. John the Apostle, at which time he had been forty years Bishop of Antioch. He was promoted to that dignity, upon the death of Evodius, first Bishop of that church, *διὰ τῆς τοῦ μεγάλου Πέτρου δεξιᾶς*, by *Peter the Apostle's own hands* †. So that we cannot suppose him unacquainted either with the state of the church in the first age after the Apostles,

* Irenæus Lib. 3. Cap. 3. and Euseb. Eccl. Hist. Lib. 3. Cap. 36.

† Chrysostom. Homil. in S. Ignatium P. 499. Vol. I. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 3. Cap. 22 and 36.

or with the doctrine and practice of the Apostles. And in his Epistles, which were written a little before his martyrdom, there is scarce any duty so earnestly pressed, or so often inculcated, as that private Christians should be obedient to the officers of the Church, and the inferior officers, the Presbyters and Deacons, to their Bishops.

In the beginning of his Epistle to the Magnesians, he speaks of Damas their Bishop; of Bassus and Apollonius their Presbyters, and of Sotion their Deacon. The last of those he praises much, because he was subject —*ὑποτάσσεται*— to the Bishop and Presbyters. And he exhorts all of them to reverence their Bishop, and to do all things in Godly peace and concord—“ Their Bishop presiding in the place of God, the Presbyters as the council of Apostles, and the Deacons as the ministers of CHRIST*.”

In his Epistle to the Trallians, he mentions their Bishop Polybius; and tells them, that “ While they live in subjection to their Bishop, as to JESUS CHRIST, they seem to live, not after the manner of men, but according to JESUS CHRIST.†” A little after he pro-

* Ignat. Epist. ad Magnes. Cap. 6. Προκαθήμενός τε ἐπισκόπος, &c.

† Epist. ad Trallian. Cap. 2. Ὅταν γὰρ τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ, &c.

ceeds thus : “ Let nothing, by any means be done without the Bishop, even as ye now practice. Subject yourselves to the college of Presbyters, as to the Apostles of JESUS CHRIST, and let the Deacons, who are the mystery of JESUS CHRIST, study to please all men; for they are not Deacons of *meats* and *drinks*, but ministers of God’s Church. In like manner, let all of you reverence the Deacons as the commandment of JESUS CHRIST—the Bishop as the SON of the FATHER, and the Presbyters as the council of God, and assembly of Apostles. Without those, no church is named*.” Having afterwards cautioned them to beware of heresies and heretics, he adds, “ And so ye will, while ye are not puffed up, and are not separated from GOD, JESUS CHRIST, nor from the Bishop, nor the precepts of the Apostles. He that is within the *altar* is pure; but whoever does any thing without the Bishop, the college of Presbyters, and the Deacon, his conscience is defiled†.” In the same manner, he speaks to the Ephesians, “ Let no man be deceived: whoever is without the *altar*, is deprived of the Bread of GOD. Let us be

* Epist. ad Trallian. Cap. 2 et 3. Αὐτοκράτωρ ὁ ἐστίν, ὡς πρὸς τοὺς ἐπίσκοπους, ὡς πρὸς τὸν ἐκκλησίαν, &c.

† Ibid. Cap. 7.

careful

careful not to oppose the Bishop, that we may be subject to God*." In the same Epistle he speaks of Bishops settled to the ends of the world, "who are after the mind of JESUS CHRIST, even as CHRIST is the mind of the FATHER†." He then proceeds to praise them all, and particularly the college of Presbyters, for their unanimous and ready compliance in all things with their Bishop.

In the beginning of his Epistle to the Philadelphians, he says, "He knew their Bishop to be promoted to his public office in the Church, not by himself, nor by men, nor through ambition, but by the love of GOD the FATHER, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST‡." Then, after cautioning them against *divisions*, he adds, "Whoever belongs to GOD and JESUS CHRIST is with the Bishop, and they who repent, and return to the unity of the Church, shall be God's, that they may live according to JESUS CHRIST. Be not deceived, my brethren; if any man follows one who divides the Church, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Endeavour therefore to partake of one and the same

* Epist. ad Ephes. Cap. 5.

† Ibid. Cap. 3.

‡ Ignat. in Epist. ad Philadelph. Cap. 1.

eucharist; for there is but one flesh of CHRIST, and one cup in the union of his *blood*, and one *altar*; as there is one Bishop, with the college of Presbyters, and my fellow-servants, the Deacons, that whatever ye do, may be done according to God*.”

In the same Epistle he says, “ When I was with you I cried out, and spoke with a loud voice, *Adhere to the Bishop, the college of Presbyters, and the Deacons.* This some have thought to be said by me, from my foresight of the separation which hath happened since that time. And He, for whose sake I am in bonds, is my witness that I knew it not from men, but the Spirit proclaimed these things, saying, *Do nothing without the Bishop. Keep your bodies as the temple of God. Love unity. Fly divisions. Be followers of JESUS CHRIST, as He is of the FATHER†.*” He adds, a little after, “ That GOD would still forgive the schismatics, provided they repented, and returned to the unity of GOD, and the council of the Bishop‡.”

* Ignat. in Epist. ad Philadelph. Cap. 3 & 4.

† Ibid. Cap. 7. *Ἐκραύγασα μεταξὺ ὧν, ἐλάλην μεγάλη φωνή, &c.*

‡ Ibid. Cap. 8. *Πᾶσιν ἔνι μετανοῦσιν ἀφίει ὁ Κύριος, &c.*

In his Epistle to the Church of Smyrna, he thus exhorts them: "Let all of you follow the Bishop, as JESUS CHRIST does the FATHER—and the college of Presbyters as the Apostles—and reverence the Deacons, as the commandment of GOD. Let no man do any thing, which concerns the Church, without the Bishop. Let that *eucharist* be accounted valid, which is ordered by the Bishop, or one whom he appoints. Where the Bishop appears, there let the people be; even as where CHRIST is, there is the Catholic Church. Without the Bishop, it is neither lawful to *baptize*, nor to celebrate the *feast of charity*; but that which he approves is well pleasing to GOD*." In the same Epistle he says, "It is well to know GOD and the Bishop. He that honors the Bishop, is honored of GOD. He that does any thing without the Bishop's privity, serves the devil†."

In his epistle to Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna, he writes, "Let nothing be done without your approbation, and do nothing but what is approved of GOD, as indeed you do

* Epist. ad. Smyr. Cap. 8. Πάντες τῷ ἐπισκοπῷ ἀκολουθεῖτε, &c.

† Ibid. Cap. 9. Καλῶς ἔχει θεὸν καὶ ἐπισκοπὸν εἶδεναι, &c.

not*." Addressing himself to the church of that place, he says, " If he, who remains a virgin, think himself better than the Bishop, he is undone. It is meet that they who marry should do it with the Bishop's approbation, that their marriage may be according to God, and not according to lust. Let all things be done to the honour of God. Give heed to the Bishop that God may give heed to you. May my life be a ransom for those who are subject to the Bishop, the Presbyters, and Deacons, and may I have my portion in God with them †!"

There are many other passages in the Epistles of this glorious saint and martyr to the same purpose. But these, which I have extracted, are sufficient to shew you, that the Christian Church was governed, in that early age, by three orders of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons; that these *orders* were of divine institution, and essential to the regular constitution of any Church—that no religious act could lawfully be done in the Church without some of them, nor by the Presbyters

* Epist. ad Polycarp. Μηδὲν ἄνευ γνώμης σου γινέσθω, &c.

† Ibid. Cap. 5 & 6. Καὶ ἐὰν γινώσκῃ πλέον τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ, ἀπωλετο, &c.

and

and Deacons without the Bishop's consent—and that communion with CHRIST could not be maintained without adhering to the communion of the Bishop. And Ignatius calls CHRIST to witness that he spoke some part of this, viz. That “nothing was to be done without the Bishop,” by the immediate inspiration of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD.

Did our first dissenters pay any regard to this doctrine? or do their posterity give us any proofs that *they* do?

From Ignatius I shall go to Irenæus. He shall begin my next Letter.—Believe me always,

Your's, &c.

LETTER II.

IRENÆUS professes himself to have been the disciple of Polycarp, the cotemporary of Ignatius, and was first a Presbyter, and afterwards Bishop of Lyons*. He makes the succession of Bishops an argument against the heretics who crept into the Church in that age, and proposes it as the surest way to *orthodoxy* in the Christian faith, to follow those descended in a direct line of succession from the Apostles. "We (says he) can reckon up those whom the Apostles ordained to be Bishops in the several churches, and who they were that succeeded them down to our own times. And had the Apostles known any hidden mysteries which they imparted to none but the *perfect*, as the here-

* Irenæus, Lib. 3. Cap. 3. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 5. Cap 4 & 5.

tics pretend, they would have committed them to those men, to whom they committed the Churches themselves. For they desired to have those in all things *perfect*, and unreplicable, whom they left to be their *successors*, and to whom they committed their own apostolic authority." He then adds, that "Because it would be endless to enumerate the succession of Bishops in all the Churches, he would instance in that of Rome, in which, he informs us, Linus was ordained the first Bishop by St. Paul and St. Peter. The next was Anacletus; after him Clemens; and so on to Eleutherius, who was the twelfth from the Apostles, and filled the episcopal chair, when Irenæus wrote this Treatise*. So that, in *this* age, there were Bishops, or single men, who acted with apostolic authority, and succeeded in a direct line from the Apostles, not only at Rome, but in all the Churches through the world.

At the same time lived Hegesippus in a different part of the world, who had travelled through many kingdoms, on purpose to learn

* Irenæus, Lib. 3. Cap. 3. Habemus annumerare eos, qui ab Apostolis instituti sunt Episcopi in Ecclesia, et Successores eorum usque ad nos, &c.

the doctrine and traditions, left by the Apostles in the Churches which they founded. And after this enquiry, he makes use of the same argument with the heretics, which Irenæus pressed on them. He says, he had *conversed with many Bishops, and received the same doctrine from them all*. One of those, whom he mentions by name, was Primus, Bishop of Corinth: another was Anicetus, whom he found Bishop of Rome at his arrival there, at which time Eleutherius was his deacon: after Anicetus, he tells us, Sotor was Bishop of Rome, and that Sotor was succeeded by Eleutherius. He also relates that Simeon, the son of Cleophas, being of our LORD's family, succeeded James in the bishopric of Jerusalem: and in every succession, says he, and in every city, the same doctrine is received, which was taught by the law, the prophets, and our LORD*."

In this age too, lived Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, who, in a Synodical Letter to Victor, the Bishop of Rome, about the time of keeping Easter, part of which is still ex-

* Fragmenta Comment. Hegesippi apud Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 4. Cap. 22. Ἀλλὰ, ὡς πλείστοις ἐπισκοποῖς συμμιξέν, &c.

tant,

tant*, appeals to the tradition of former Bishops and martyrs, and the practise of those who lived in his own time. Among others, he mentions Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, and a martyr—Thraseas, Bishop of Eumenia, and a martyr—Sagaris, Bishop of Laodicea, and a martyr—Seven Bishops of his own kindred, and (πολλὰ πλῆθη) *great multitudes* of Bishops, who assembled with him to consult about the time of Easter. And, he says, when he wrote this Epistle he had been *sixty-five years* (ἐν Κυρίῳ) *a Christian*. I hope you will allow that this venerable old Bishop, who lived the greatest part of the next age, after the death of the Apostles, is a witness beyond exception, that Bishops were settled in all the Churches about him.

Cotemporary with these was Clemens of Alexandria, the most universally learned man of that age. In his *Pædagogus*, having selected some texts of Scripture, which contain a summary of the duties which concern all Christians in general, he adds, "That there are other precepts, without number, which concern men in particular capacities: some which relate to Bishops; others to Presby-

* Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 5. Cap. 24.

ters ;

ters; others which belong to deacons, and some which concern widows, &c.*" So that if we may believe this great and good man, even in the Apostles times, when the Scriptures were written, there were all these *three orders* in the Church, and every one of them had distinct offices. In his Stromata† he tells us, "That though Matthias was not elected by our LORD with the rest of the Apostles, yet, having deserved to be advanced to that office, he was substituted in Judas's place. And even now, says he, they who live up to the perfect rules of the Gospel, may be taken into the number of the Apostles. He is indeed a Deacon and Minister of the divine will, and he a Presbyter of the Church, who does both practise and teach what our LORD hath prescribed: not being reputed just, because he is a Presbyter, but chosen into the college of Presbyters because he was a just person. Though such a man be not honored with the *chief seat* here on earth, he shall sit in one of the twenty-four thrones, mentioned in John's Revelation, judging the people.

* Pædag. Lib. 3. Cap. 12. p. 264. ed. Paris.

† Strom. Lib. 6. p. 667.

A little after, he speaks of the gradual promotion of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, which he resembles to the *orders* of *angels**. Here again are clearly distinguished *three orders* of ministers, the chief of which is the place and office of the Apostles.

In another place he reports, "That St. John the Apostle returning from Patmos, the place of his banishment, to Ephesus, went about the neighbouring nations, and in some places ordained Bishops; in others established entire Churches; and in others set apart such for the *clergy* as were pointed out to him by *the Spirit*†." Here St. John the Apostle ordained Bishops, and also *inferior clergy*, by the particular direction of the HOLY GHOST.

The Presbyterians will tell you that this same Clemens, in his Stromata, contains all the ministers of the primitive Church, under the two names of Presbyters and Deacons, and that Presbyters were of the same order with Bishops, because Bishops are sometimes

* Strom. Lib. 6. p. 667. Επεὶ δὲ αἱ ἐνταῦθα χεῖρ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν προκοπὴ αἱ ἐπισκόπων, πρεσβυτέρων, καὶ διακόνων, μιμήματα, ὅμαι, ἀγγελικῆς δοξῆς, κακεῖνης τῆς οἰκονομίας τυγχανουσιν.

† Libro Quis Dives Salvetur, p. 111. edit. Oxon. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 3. Cap. 23.

included in the name of Presbyters. But in this they misunderstand Clemens, or rather catch at an ambiguous expression to support their cause.

In Clemens's sense of this disputed paragraph, the Apostles themselves were presbyters; and so they are sometimes called. St. John calls himself a Presbyter, both in his second and third Epistle; and St. Peter styles himself a fellow-presbyter of the Presbyters to whom his first Epistle was directed*. But we must not conclude from hence, that all presbyters were apostles. For though all the power of presbyters belonged to apostles, and therefore they might well be called Presbyters, there are several powers which were exercised by the apostles, that never belonged to any mere presbyter. In like manner, in the Jewish church, there was an High Priest; under him priests of an inferior order, and a third order of Levites below both the former: yet, in many antient writers, who do expressly, in other places, distinguish the High Priest from the inferior order of priests, all the *three orders* are comprehended under the two

* 1 Peter v. 1.

names of Priests and Levites*. The reason of their writing so is plainly this, that though the Priests were not High Priests, nor ever dignified with that title, or the office annexed to it, yet the High Priest was a true and proper Priest; and, like our High Priests, or Bishops, could lawfully discharge any part of the sacerdotal office.

This will account to you for Clemens's seeming contradictions in his Stromata, when speaking of the several orders of ministers in the church. When therefore you read Strom. VII. page 700, where he writes of the Presbyters and Deacons, as including all the orders of the Christian ministry, look also to the other parts of his Stromata†, and you will see him treat of Bishops, of Presbyters, and of Deacons, as *three distinct orders*.

Another person of eminence, who flourished about the same time with Clemens, though in a different part of the world, was Tertullian. From him it appears that Bishops were universally settled in all the Churches of

* Clemens Romanus Epist. Cap. 33 & 40. Philo Judæus Lib. 3. De vita Moïsis, p. 679. edit. Paris. Ibid. p. 694. Idem de Sacerdotum, Honoribus. p. 834.

† Idem. Strom. p. 667, &c. edit. Paris.

Africa, his native country, and had been so from the Apostles times. In his Treatise of Baptism he affirms, "That the power of baptizing is lodged in the Bishop; and that it may be also exercised by Presbyters and Deacons, but not without the Bishop's commission*." This is a full evidence of the superiority of Bishops over Presbyters in that age, these not being allowed to exercise even the lowest function in the Church, as baptism was accounted, without the Bishop's permission. Tertullian could not think this an innovation in the polity of the church; for he urges against heretics the same argument of the universal consent of Bishops, succeeding in a direct line from the Apostles, which Irenæus and Hegesippus had used before him. And this succession he tells us, was to be seen not only at Smyrna, where Polycarp was made Bishop by St. John, or in Rome, where Clemens was ordained by St. Peter, but in *all* Christian Churches. And he chal-

* Lib. de Baptismo, Cap. 17—Dandi Baptismum quidem habet jus summus Sacerdos, qui est Episcopus, dehinc Presbyteri & Diaconi, non tamen sine Episcopi auctoritate, propter Ecclesiæ honorem, quo salvo, salva pax est.

lenges heretics to shew the like*. This is an undeniable proof that *then*, the lineal succession of Bishops from the Apostles, was a fact undoubted. And this is also a very sufficient answer to some other passages of this Author, where he affirms "That all Christians were made priests by CHRIST, &c. &c." In such assertions as these we are to make a difference between his opinions and his testimony of facts. His singular Comment on Matt. xviii. 20. and Rev. i. 6, 10. concerning the priesthood of all Christians, in general, is merely his own private opinion, and peculiarly so indeed.—But he speaks of the episcopal succession as a known matter of fact, in which he, who lived in the next age, could not be mistaken. And let me here, once for all, beg of

* Tertull. Lib. de Præscript. Hæretic. Cap. 32. Ceterum, si quæ audeant interferere se ætati Apostolicæ, ut ideo videantur ab Apostolis traditæ, quia sub Apostolis fuerunt, possumus dicere: Edant ergo origines Ecclesiarum Suarum: Evolvant ordinem Episcoporum suorum ita per successiones ab initio decurrentem, ut primus ille Episcopus aliquem ex Apostolis, vel Apostolicis viris, qui tamen cum Apostolis perseveraverit, habuerit auctorem et antecessorem. Hoc enim modo Ecclesiæ Apostolicæ census suos deferunt: sicut Smyrnæorum ecclesia Polycarpum ab Jahanne conlocatum refert: sicut Romanorum, Clementem a Petro ordinatum itidem. Perinde utique et ceteræ exhibent, quos ab Apostolis in episcopatum constitutos Apostolici seminis traduces habeant. Constringant, tale aliquid Hæretici. *Idem, adv. Marcionem. Lib. 4. Cap. 5, &c.*

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you

you to make a proper difference, in reading the antient fathers, between their reasonings and their testimony. In the *former*, we have full liberty, upon a candid and impartial examination, to follow their conclusions, or to reject them, as we find them well or ill grounded. But in the *latter*, since we must look on them as men of great probity, and such as would not willingly deceive us, we cannot reasonably deny them our assent, when they relate to things done in their own times, or in the times of those with whom they have conversed. They who refuse to allow them this authority, may with equal reason reject all kind of histories.

In the beginning of the next century lived Origen. He was scholar to Clemens the Alexandrian. And he, speaking of the *debts* in the LORD'S Prayer, first insists on the *debts* or duties common to all Christians; and then adds, " Beside these general debts, there is a *debt* to *widows*, who are maintained by the Church; another to Deacons; another to Presbyters; and another to Bishops; which is the greatest of all, and exacted by the SAVIOUR of the whole Church, who will severely punish

punish the non-payment of it*. Here Origen plainly makes Bishops superior to Presbyters and Deacons, by the appointment of CHRIST. In another place, he prescribes the same rule for orthodoxy in the faith, which has been already mentioned from Irenæus and others. “To adhere to the rule of the celestial Church of CHRIST, according to the succession of the Apostles†;” that is, as appears from the like passages of Irenæus, &c. of Bishops succeeding in a direct line from, and in the place of the Apostles. And in several other places, he distinguishes, very pointedly, the three orders of Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons.

In the same age Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, flourished. He had been Tertullian’s scholar. His Epistles and Tracts contain very full account of the several Church *officers*, and the method of transacting all *ecclesiastical* affairs which was observed, both in his own and other Churches at that time.

* Origin, Lib. Περὶ εὐχῆς. Χωρὶς δὲ τῶν κατὰ τοὺς ἁγίους ὄντων, ὅς τις χήρας προνομιεύει ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ὀφειλὴ, καὶ ἑτέρα διακονῶν, καὶ ἄλλα πρεσβυτέρων καὶ ἐπισκόπων δὲ ὀφειλὴ, βαρυτάτη ἐστὶν, ἀπαιτούμενη ὑπὸ τῆς ὅλης ἐκκλησίας Σωτῆρος, καὶ ἐκδικουμένη, εἰ μὴ ἀποδιδῶτο.

† Idem. Philocal. Cap. 1. p. 7. edit. Cantab.

Collected together they would make a volume: I shall, therefore, only select a few passages out of him, which may be sufficient for our present purpose.

First, he affirms that no Church was without a Bishop. Hence, as from an unquestionable matter of fact, he argues against *Novatian**, “That there being only one Church and one *episcopacy* all the world over, and orthodox and pious Bishops being already regularly ordained through all the provinces of the Roman empire, and in every city, he must needs be a *schismatic* who laboured to set up false Bishops in opposition to them.” And in another place he says, That there cannot be more than one Bishop, at the same time, in a Church: that a second Bishop is no Bishop at all: that they who adhere to him are *schismatics*, and have no title to the Church’s communion, or the privileges of the new covenant.

To this purpose he speaks in the case of *Novation*, who was set up against Cornelius,

* Cypriani Epist. 55. edit. Oxon. Cum sit a Christo, una Ecclesia per totum mundum in multa membra divisa, item Episcopatus unus, Episcoporum multorum concordie numerositate diffusus—Ille post Dei traditionem, post connexam et ubique conjunctam Catholicæ Ecclesiæ unitatem, humanam conetur Ecclesiam facere, &c. &c.

Bishop

Bishop of Rome. "Cornelius having lawfully, and according to the will of God and CHRIST succeeded, on the death of Fabianus, whoever will be made Bishop, whilst he fills the *episcopal* chair, must be ordained out of the Church: for he cannot be ordained by the Church, who does not maintain the Church's unity. Whoever he be, or whatever he may boast of, or assume to himself, he is profane: he is an alien: he is out of the Church: and since after the *first*, there can be no *second*, whoever is made Bishop after the *first* can be no *second* Bishop—he can be no Bishop at all*." "The Church, continues he, is but *one*; and if it be with Novation, it is not with Cornelius—if it be with Cornelius, Novation is not in the Church." A little before he writes, "That no man could be baptized or sanctified in the communion of Novation†. So that in St. Cyprian's opinion, to have two Bishops at *once* is utterly inconsistent with the constitution of the Christian Church. And they who adhere to the second Bishop, or a *separatest minister* from the Church, do thereby forfeit all their right to

* Idem, Epist. 55. p. 243.

† Idem, Epist. 69.

the blessings and privileges of the Church. But to have many Presbyters and Deacons was a thing ordinary and necessary. We read of many of both these orders, in Cyprian's Epistles, who belonged to the Church of Carthage, of which he was Bishop. And Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, in his Epistle to Fabius, Bishop of Antioch, tells us, that in his Church of Rome there were forty-six Presbyters, and seven Deacons*.

In another place Cyprian says, "This is, and ought to be our chief care and study, that we maintain the *unity*, which was delivered by our LORD and his Apostles, to *us* their *successors*; and to gather into the Church, the wandering sheep, which factious and heretical men have separated from their mother†"

As a farther and indisputable proof of the superior and distinct *rank*, *power*, and *order* of Bishops from that of Presbyters, we find this eminent Bishop, saint, and martyr, speaking of his priests as well as his laity, as kings generally do of their *subjects*, "My clergy and people, my Presbyters and Deacons†; and though

* Cyprianus, Epist. 45. p. 232.

†† Ibid. Epist. 41. p. 17, 29, 31, 40, 45, &c.

Presbyters were admitted to a kind of partnership in the *pastoral* charge with the Bishop, and this glorious martyr often calls them "*Compresbyteros*," his *fellows-presbyters*, they could not do any *ecclesiastical* act without the Bishop's permission, and were liable to be censured by him, when they made any such attempt. When, therefore, some of his Presbyters, in his absence, and without his consent, would have restored to the Church's communion some people who had lapsed in the time of persecution, he tells them, "That he had a long time held his peace, hoping by his forbearance to have obliged them to be quiet. But their excessive presumption would not suffer him to be silent any longer. For what a dreadful prospect, says he, must we have of the divine vengeance, when some of the Presbyters, neither mindful of the Gospel, nor of their own *station*; neither regarding the future judgment of God, nor the Bishop who now *presides* over them, dare arrogate to themselves, what was never attempted under any of my predecessors*?" What do you think

* Idem principio Epist. 16. p. 194. Deu patientiam meam tenui, Fratres carissimi, quasi yerecundum silentium nostrum proficeret ad quietem. Sed cum, &c.

of this subordination of Presbyters to their Bishops, in Cyprian's age, and under his predecessors? What would *our first dissenting Presbyters* have said, if our Bishops had treated them in the manner Cyprian did these Presbyters of his, whom he *excommunicated*, a little after, for a lesser fault than *separating* from the Church? and what would our present *dissenting ministers* say now, if government was to second *our* present Bishops in exercising a similar Church discipline on *them*, who, in such an enlightened age ought to know better, and think more liberally, than their fanatic fathers?

Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, one of Cyprian's cotemporaries, in an Epistle to him, perfectly agrees with him in calling Bishops the successors of the Apostles, &c.*

In the declining part of this century, and the beginning of the next, lived Eusebius. He had made a most diligent and successful search into the antient records of the Church, and the Christian writers who lived before

* Cyprian. Epist. 85. p. 324. Potestas ergo, &c.

him ;

him; and he derives the Bishops of all the Churches from the Apostles.

How many, says he, of the Apostles disciples, and who they were that faithfully copied the example of the Apostles, and were approved to be Shepherds of the Churches which they founded; is not easy to say, besides those whom Paul himself mentions. He had indeed a great number of assistants, and, as he calls them fellow-soldiers, whose memories are preserved to all posterity in his Epistles—And Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, mentions some of them by name. Of these Timothy is said to have been the first Bishop of Ephesus, Titus of the Churches in Crete*.

A little after he proceeds to tell us that “Crescens was sent to Gallia: so he calls Galatia, as St. Paul himself is witness. Linus, whom he mentions in his second to Timothy, as being at Rome with him, was made Bishop of Rome next after Peter. Clemens†, who

* Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 3. Cap. 4. “Ὅσοι δὲ τούτων, καὶ τινες, γνώσις ζηλωταὶ γεγονότες, τὰς πρὸς αὐτῶν ἰδρυθείσας ἱκανοὶ ποιμαίνειν ἰδοκιμαθῆσαν ἐκκλησίας, ὃ ραδιον ἐπῆν, μὴ ὅτιγε ὅσους ἂν τις ἐκ τῷ Παύλῳ φωνῶν ἀναλεξοίτο, &c.

† This Clemens, as I should have told you before, who could not be ignorant of our Lord's intention, nor of the Apostle's doctrine

who was the third Bishop of Rome, is owned by St. Paul, as his *fellow-labourer* and *fellow-wrestler*. And Dionysius the Arcopagite, whom Luke mentions as Paul's first convert, after his oration in the Arcopagus at Athens, is reported to have been the first Bishop of that Church by another Dionysius, a very ancient writer, and Bishop of Corinth. And in the sequel of this history, the succession of Bishops from the Apostles shall be set down in their orders*.

This was the rise of episcopacy, according to Eusebius. And in the following parts of his history, he has given us such exact and authentic catalogues of the Bishops, who presided in all the principal cities of the Roman empire, from the Apostles down to his own time, that it is as impossible for an impartial man, who shall compare this historian with the rest of the primitive fathers, to doubt,

trine in a matter of such important concern as the succession of officers in the Church, informs us, that "The Apostles having it revealed by our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that contentions would arise about episcopacy, or Church government, on this account ordained Bishops and Deacons, and gave them this prescript, That upon their death, other approved men should succeed in their ministry." Vid. Clemens. Epist. ad Corinth. Cap. 44. — Καὶ οἱ Ἀπόστολοι ἡμῶν ἐγνωσαν διὰ τὴν Κυρίαν ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, &c. And Cap. 42.

* Ibidem.

whether

whether there was a succession of Bishops from the Apostles, as it would be to call in question the succession of Roman Emperors from Julius Cæsar, or the succession of Kings in any other country. Indeed those who have been produced, and others who have been passed by, lest my letter should exceed all bounds, are such a multitude of unexceptionable witnesses, as can scarce be collected for any other matter of fact, except the rise and progress of Christianity; so that whoever shall deny this, *as our Dissenters do*, may with better reason reject all histories whatever.

It would be an easy matter to continue this account of the government of the Church by Bishops through all succeeding ages to this time; but it being universally confessed, even by the professed enemies of episcopacy, that the church was governed by Bishops of a superior order to mere Presbyters, after the time of Constantine, in which Eusebius, the last witness I have cited lived, it will be needless to carry it beyond this period. However, to confirm what has been said, I shall enquire, in my next Letter, whether in the age of Constantine, or those who succeeded him, the government

vernment of the Church by Bishops was reckoned a late and human institution, or of divine appointment, and derived from the Apostles.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER III.

IN this Letter, I am to proceed with the inquiry I promised in my last. I begin with Athanasius. He tells Dracontius, who declined a Bishoprick to which he was elected, that "Since the government of the Church by Bishops was instituted by the Apostles, according to CHRIST's direction, by refusing to be a Bishop, *in that exigence of affairs*, he would despise our SAVIOUR, who ordained the episcopal office." And he adds, "That if all others before him had been of his mind, he could not have been made a Christian; or if others after him should take up the same resolution, the Churches could not subsist*. Here we see that Bishops were of our LORD's appointment, and essential to the constitution of the Church.

* Athanasii Epist. ad Dracontium. Tom. 1. page 264, 265.
Edit. Paris. 1698.

Epiphanius

Epiphanius accounting why St. Paul, in some places, mentions only Bishops and Deacons without Presbyters; in others Presbyters and Deacons without Bishops, gives this reason for it: "That the Apostles could not perfectly settle all things at once, and therefore, in their conversions, where no person was fitly qualified to be a Bishop, they only ordained Presbyters and Deacons; and such places remained, for the present, without a Bishop. In other places, where one was found fit to be a Bishop, but by reason of the small number of believers, there were no others qualified to be Presbyters, they ordained only Bishops and Deacons; but never was any Bishop without a Deacon to minister to him*." This account he affirms to be taken from the *most ancient histories* βαδύταταις ιστορίαις; and it is evident that, in his time, every person of intelligence believed that the superiority of Bishops over Presbyters was established by the Apostles.

St. Ambrose having said, "That one duty is required by God of Bishops, another of Priests, and another of Deacons," presently adds, "That in order to describe the office of

* Epiphan. Hæres. 75. Sect. 5. Pag. 908. Edit. Paris.

Bishops, he would go through the rules which the Apostle has prescribed for every act of the episcopal office*." He then proceeds to explain that part of St. Paul's Epistle to Timothy, which concerns the ordination and office of Bishops. By this it is clear that St. Ambrose considered Bishops as a superior *order* to Presbyters, and allowed that they were settled in the Church, in the days of the Apostles, and by their direction.

It is very common for the fathers, in this and the following ages, to use the names of Apostles and Bishops as synonymous terms. Thus Epaphroditus, and others, whom St. Paul himself called Apostles, are generally said to have been Bishops, as was mentioned above. It would be endless to cite all the witnesses who might be produced on this occasion, and therefore I shall only mention two or three more, who having said that the names of Bishop and Presbyter were used promiscuously, and without any distinction in the apostolic age, may be thought less prejudiced in favour of the episcopal order, than some others. Let us see then, whether those

* Ambrosius Lib. De Dignitate Sacerd. sub finem. Cap. 4. mox initio, Cap. 5.

fathers inferred that there was a *parity* between the offices of Presbyters and Bishops, because they supposed them to have had the same names.

One of those, and perhaps the *first*, who speaks of the promiscuous use of the names of Bishop and Presbyters, was St. Chrysostom, who lived about the end of the fourth century. But he declares, in many places, that Bishops and Presbyters were quite distinct *orders* in the Apostolic age.

In his Eleventh Homily on the First Epistle of Paul to Timothy, he says, "The reason why the Apostle, having delivered rules for the behaviour of Bishops, immediately proceeds to the Deacons, without mentioning the intermediate order of Presbyters, was this: That there was not a very great difference between Bishops and Presbyters; for even Presbyters are permitted to teach and preside over the Church: so that the same rules which are prescribed for Bishops may also serve for Presbyters; there being scarce any act of the episcopal office which may not be exercised by Presbyters, except *imposition of hands**."

* St. Chrysost. Principio Homil. 11. in 1 Timoth.

So that in this father's opinion, the *order* of Bishops was distinct from that of Presbyters, when St. Paul wrote his Epistle to Timothy, however their *names* might not *then* be constantly distinguished. And *the imposition of hands*, which he makes the Bishop's prerogative, as all other ancient fathers do, was in his judgment, though our Dissenters think nothing of it, a matter of such important and high consequence, that he calls it, very properly, "The *chief* and *principal* of all *ecclesiastical powers*, and *that* which, above every thing, maintains and holds together the Christian Church*.

The *first* of the Latin fathers, who is cited for the promiscuous use of the names of Bishop and Presbyter, is the Author of the Commentaries of St. Paul's Epistles, published under the name of St. Ambrose, who professes himself to write under Pope Damasus, who died in the year of our LORD 384. And, if we may rely on this Author's judgment, there were Bishops, in the strictest sense of this name, when St. Paul wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians: for he, ex-

* S. Chrysoſt. Principio Homil. 16. in 1 Tim.

plaining that passage of this Epistle, where the *women* are commanded to *have power over their heads, because of the Angels*, says, "That by *Angels* are meant Bishops, as we may learn from St. John's Revelation*." Whether this interpretation be true, or otherwise, which is not material to know, it is a full proof that he thought there were Bishops in the Church at that very early period. And that he meant Bishops, distinct from Presbyters, is plain from what he says a little after—"That the Bishop is the Vicegerent of CHRIST, and represents his person."—"That He decreed every Church should be governed by one Bishop, even as all things proceed from one GOD the FATHER." And, in several other places, he tells us, "That in a Church there were several Presbyters and Deacons, but never more than *one* Bishop, even in the Apostles times†."

Not long after, flourished Theodoret, in the beginning of the fifth century. He makes the names of Bishop and Presbyter to have

* Ambrosiaster in 1 Cor. xi. 10. Potestatem, Velamen significavit: Angelos Episcopos dicit, sicut docetur in Apocælypsi Johannis.

† Ibidem—Episcopus personam habet Christi—Vicarius Domini est, &c.

been

been fynonymous terms, in the apostolic age; but then he will have those of the *chief order* to have been called Apostles. "The same persons, says he, were antiently called Bishops and Presbyters; and they, whom we now call Bishops, were then called Apostles. But in process of time the name of Apostles was appropriated to them who were Apostles in the strict sense; and the rest, who had formerly the name of Apostles, were stiled Bishops. In this sense Epaphroditus is called the Apostle of the Philippians; Titus the Apostle of the Cretians; and Timothy of Asia*."

From these testimonies, with many others easy to be produced, it appears, that in the next age, after the Roman Emperors professed the Christian religion, the distinction of the Clergy from the Laity, and of Bishops from the lower orders of Clergymen, were always reckoned to be of divine institution, and derived from the Apostles down to that time. And it deserves to be observed, that there is scarce any doctrine of Christianity, which met with less opposition in the primitive ages of

* Theodoretus in 1 Tim. 3.

the Church than *this*. Indeed, in Tertullian's time, there were some who allowed Laymen to execute all the functions of the sacerdotal office, as our Sectarians do.—“ Their ordinations, says he, are without distinction, mutable and unfixed. One is a Bishop to day, another to-morrow. To day he is a Deacon, who is a Reader the day after. To day he is a Presbyter, who to-morrow is a Layman; for they commit the sacerdotal functions to Laymen*.”

But, what sort of principles were those men of? If we believe Tertullian, they were such as allowed not laymen only, but even *women*, contrary to St. Paul's express command, to *teach* in their public assemblies; and, as he supposes, to *baptize*†. Some of them were for a *plurality* of *Gods*, and the rest, who declared for the *unity* of the *Godhead*, spoke of God in a very different manner from what the Church, in all ages, has believed, and the Scriptures describe him to be‡. So that we need not envy any man the company of these *heretics*, in speaking against the Christian *priesthood*, who neither regarded the

* Tertullianus de Præscrip. Hæret. Cap. 41. &c.

† Ibidem.

‡ Ibidem. Paulo ante:

authority

authority of our LORD's Apostles, nor worshipped the same God with Christians.

Afterwards, in the fourth century, appeared Acrius, a Presbyter of Sebastia in Pontus, and a follower of Acrius's heresy; who, having been disappointed of the Bishopric of Sebastia, began to load the Bishop with calumnies, and by other artifices, to lessen his authority with the people. When he could not compass his design by these means, he left the Bishop's communion, and drew a party after him, whom he persuaded, in order to make them adhere to him in opposition to their Bishop, that Bishops and Presbyters were of the same *order*, and that there is no act of religion which a Presbyter is not as capable of doing as a Bishop. For which opinion, particularly, he is ranked among the heretics by Epiphanius, his contemporary, who calls it a motion "full of folly and madness, beyond what human nature is capable of*." So that this is rather a confirmation that it was the received opinion of that age, that the *order* of Bishops was superior to that of Presbyters; otherwise Acrius's assertion could not have been condemned

* Epiphanius Heres. 75, p. 906.

for *heresy*, or even *singularity*. This Sebastian Presbyter seems to have been such a genius as some of our first Dissenters were.

All these historic proofs considered, is it not strange that St. Jerom's single *conjecture*, about the original of episcopacy, should prejudice any man of literature or thought, against the divine institution of it? Jerom's opinion, and the foundation of it, as he himself explains them in an Epistle to Evagrius, and in his Comment on the First Chapter of Titus, were shortly this: "Having observed that the name of Bishop and Presbyter are used promiscuously in the Scriptures, and that the Apostles call themselves Presbyters*, *which I accounted for in a former letter*, Jerom concludes, that at first there was no distinction between their Officers, but that Apostle, Bishop, and Presbyter, were only different names of the same thing; and that the Churches were then generally governed by a college of Presbyters, equal in rank and dignity to one another. Afterwards divisions being occasioned by this *parity* among Presbyters, when every Presbyter began to claim, as his own particular subjects, those whom he had baptized;

* 1 Peter v. 1.—2 John i.—3 John i.

and

and it was said by the people, *I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas.* To remedy this evil, it was decreed, all the world over, that one of the Presbyters, in every Church, should be set over the rest, and peculiarly called Bishop; and that the chief care of the Church should be committed to him."

In this account of the rise of episcopal primacy over Presbyters, it may be observed, that St. Jerom founds it on the synonymous use of the names of Apostle, Bishop, and Presbyter, which was observed by St. Chrysostom, Theodoret, and other antient fathers, who never thought of drawing such an inference from it; but, on the contrary, always affirmed, that there was a disparity of *order* among them, notwithstanding their *names* were used promiscuously. And I hope you are satisfied, from what I have wrote you on much higher authorities, that this imagination of St. Jerom's was a poor foundation to build such an opinion on.—But it is not strange, that having exalted Presbyters to a *parity* with Apostles, contrary to the most plain testimony of the Scriptures, he should equal them with Bishops, contrary to the sense of the antient fathers. I wish our Dissenters of learning and

candor would, for the sake of truth, peace, decency, and conscience, never talk or teach again such absurdities as this mistake of St. Jerom has led them into. For

The premises, on which this opinion is founded, being inconclusive, there is no reason to pay any regard to what he says of the decree passed in all Churches, for the raising of one Presbyter above the rest, which he does not indeed pretend to support by any antient testimony. He only conjectures, that such a decree must have been passed, because he had before conjectured, that Apostles, Bishops and Presbyters, were all equal at the first. But when or by what authority was this decree enacted? If in the second century, as some would persuade us, for no better reason than that they are unwilling to derive episcopacy from the Apostles, it is most surprising, not only that no Presbyter in the world should take it ill, that one of his *Fellow-Presbyters* should be advanced above him, or think it his duty to oppose this *unscriptural* model. But that so great a change should be introduced in all parts of the Christian world, at a time when the Church flourished with men of great parts and learning, and yet not the least

least mention be made of it in any of their writings; but on the contrary, both they and the Christian writers of the next ages after them, should always speak of the *primacy* of Bishops over Presbyters, as no late invention, but of antient right, and derived from the Apostles themselves. We may as well affirm, contrary to the accounts of all historians, that all nations in the world were first *republics*, and afterwards, at a certain time, which no person knows of, they became *monarchies*, by general consent, on account of their being obnoxious to factions.

But it is unnecessary to raise more objections against this notion, since Jerom himself plainly refers the making of this *decree* to the Apostles. He not only assigns, as the occasion of it, the attachment of some to Paul, of others to Apollos, and of others to Peter, which is reprov'd in St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians; but in this same Epistle to Evagrius, he expressly calls the distinction of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, an Apostolic *tradition*, and *taken by the Apostles from the Old Testament*, where Aaron, his sons, the priests, and Levites, correspond

to

to the *three orders* of the Christian Church*. And in his catalogue of ecclesiastical writers he affirms, that “ Presently after our LORD’s Ascension, James was ordained Bishop of Jerusalem, by the Apostles—Timothy was made Bishop of Ephesus—Titus, Bishop of Crete, by St. Paul—Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, by St. John—and he mentions several other Bishops, who lived in the next age after the Apostles.” So that even in St. Jerom’s opinion, after all, the *primacy* of Bishops over Presbyters, was an Apostolic institution.

But whatever was St. Jerom’s sense of this matter, since it has appeared to be ill grounded, and contrary both to the universal consent of primitive antiquity, and of the Scriptures, we need not have the smallest concern about it. The truth is, some Deacons, who enjoyed richer places in the Church than many of the Presbyters, claimed several privileges superior to them, and were unwilling to be admitted into that *order*. This ir-

* Ut sciamus Traditiones Apostolicas sumptas de Veteri Testamento; quod Aaron, et Filii ejus, atque Levitæ in Templo fuerint; hoc sibi Episcopi, Presbyteri & Diaconi vindicent in Ecclesia.—Jer. Epist. ad Evag.

regularity

regularity was so highly resented by St. Jerom, who was a man of passion, and only a Presbyter, that to raise his own order beyond the competition of Deacons, he endeavoured to make it equal by its original institution with Bishops and Apostles. It is common for the best of men, in the heat of disputation, to run into one extreme by avoiding another. And thus did good St. Jerom. Yet even at this time he owns, in the same Epistle to Evagrius, that none but Bishops had a right to *ordain* ministers. And in many other places he approves of the subordination of Presbyters to Bishops, and never once allows mere Presbyters the power of *ordaining*, or seems inclined to introduce a *parity* of ministers into the Church.

I persuade myself you are now convinced from the Scriptures, and the most eminent writers of the four first centuries, that as our LORD was sent by GOD the FATHER to establish a Church in the world; so the Apostles were authorized by our LORD to enlarge and govern the Church after his ascension, and that they derived the same authority to their successors, the Bishops, who always have been,
are,

are, and will be, the supreme order of church officers, till the end of the world.

Before I leave this argument, I might prove to you that, as there was a *parity* of *power* given by CHRIST to the Apostles, which all the Dissenters of our Church allow, the same *parity* was derived by the Apostles to their successors, the Bishops; and that none of the episcopal dignity were invested by our LORD, or by his Apostles, with any particular *jurisdiction* or *power* over any of the rest of their order. But this is not a part of our dispute with the Protestant Dissenters. I shall however add, for your satisfaction, that though all the Bishops of the primitive Church were invested with the same *office* and *authority*, some of them were superior to others in *place*; as it was, before *their* institution, in the college of Apostles*.”

In the first age of Christianity, our LORD's kinsmen, the Bishops of Jerusalem, were reckoned the *first* of the *episcopal* college. Afterwards the Bishop of Rome, the chief *metropolis* of the world, was allowed to have the pre-eminence by common consent. On this

* Vid. Archbp. Potter on Church Government, Chap. iii.—
Dr. Cave's Primitive Christianity, &c.

account,

account, and on this only, Cyprian calls the Church of Rome the *principal Church*; and that Rome ought to precede Carthage, *pro magnitudine sua*, by reason of its greatness, but for no other reason. For a similar cause, when the Roman Emperors made Constantinople the place of their residence, the Bishop of Constantinople was next in dignity to the Bishop of Rome. Before that period, the Bishop of Alexandria, which was the next city to Rome for wealth and the number of its inhabitants, had the *second* place in the college of Bishops. The third place was allowed to the Bishop of Antioch, which was the *third* city in the Roman empire. For the same reason, when Cæsarea was made the *political metropolis* of Palestine, and our LORD's kinsmen were all dead, the Bishop of Cæsarea preceded the Bishop of Jerusalem, and all others in that province. And to mention only one more instance, the rest of the African Bishops gave place to the Bishop of Carthage, which was the *principal* city in that country. So that the Bishops of the greater cities seem, by a general consent, to have taken place of the Bishops of the lesser and more obscure cities.

The

The truth is, as Christianity increased and overspread all parts, and especially the cities of the Roman empire, it was found necessary to enlarge yet farther the episcopal office; and as there was commonly a Bishop in every great city, so in the metropolis (as the Romans called it) the mother city of every province, wherein they held Courts of Civil Judicature, there was

AN ARCHBISHOP or METROPOLITAN*.

He had ecclesiastical jurisdiction over all the Churches within that province. He was superior to all the Bishops within those limits. To him it belonged either to *ordain* or to *ratify* the *elections* and ordinations of all the Bishops within *his* province, insomuch that, without *his* confirmation, they were looked upon as null and void. *Once*, at least, *every year*, *he* was to summon the Bishops under *him* to a *Synod*, to enquire into and direct the ecclesiastical affairs within that province—to inspect the *lives* and *manners*, the *opinions* and *principles*, of his Bishops—to *admonish*, *reprove*, and *suspend* them that were *disorderly* and *irregular*. If any controversies or contentions

* Vid. Dr. Cave's Primitive Christianity.

happen

happen between any of them, *he* was to have the *bearing* and *determination* of them; and indeed, no matter of *moment* was done within the whole province, without first consulting him in the case.

Besides this Metropolitan, there was many times another in the same province, who enjoyed nothing but the name and title, his episcopal see being, by the Emperor's Pragmatic, erected into the dignity of a *metropolis*. He was only an

HONORARY METROPOLITAN.

He possessed no real power and jurisdiction, and had no other privilege, but that he took place above other ordinary Bishops, in all things else equally subject with them to the Metropolitan of the province, as the council of Chalcedon determines in this case*.

When this office of Metropolitan first began, is uncertain, but this we know, that the council of Nice, settling the just rights and privileges of Metropolitan Bishops, speaks of them as a thing of *ancient* date, ushering in the *canon* with an ἀρχαία ἐν ἡμετέροις, *Let ancient customs still take place*†. The original of the *institution* seems to have been partly to comply with

* Concil. Chalc. Can. 124.

† Ibid. Can. 6.

peoples occasions, who often resorted to the *metropolis* for dispatch of their affairs, and so might fitly discharge their *civil* and *ecclesiastical* concerns both at once; and partly, because of the great confluence of people to that city, that the Bishop of it might have *pre-eminence* above the rest, and the honor of the church bear some proportion to that of the state*.

After this, sprang up another branch of the episcopal office, as much superior to that of Metropolitans, as theirs was to ordinary Bishops. These were called

PRIMATES and PATRIARCHS.

They had the jurisdiction over many provinces. For the understanding of this, it is necessary to know, that when Christianity came to be fully settled in the world, they contrived to model the external government of the Church as near as might be to the civil government of the Roman empire. The parallel is most exactly drawn by an ingenious writer of our own nation †, and the sum of it is this :

* Vid. Concil. Antioch. Can. 9.

† Edw. Breerwood. Patriarch, Governm. of the Ancient Church, Quest. 1.

The whole empire of Rome was divided into *thirteen dioceses*, (so they called those divisions,) and those contained about *one hundred and twenty provinces*, and every province several cities. Now, as in every city, there was a *temporal* magistrate, for the executing of justice, and keeping the peace, both for that city, and the towns round about it, so there was also a Bishop for *spiritual* order and government, whose jurisdiction was of like extent and latitude.

In every province there was a Proconsul or President, whose seat was usually at the *metropolis*, or chief city of the province; and hither all inferior cities came for judgment in matters of importance. And in proportion to this there was in the same city an Archbishop or Metropolitan for matters of Ecclesiastical concernment. Lastly, in every diocese, the Emperors had their *Vicarii* or Lieutenants, who dwelt in the principal city of the diocese, where all *Imperial Edicts* were published, and from whence they were sent abroad into the several provinces, and where was the chief *tribunal* where all causes, not determinable elsewhere, were decided. And to answer *this*, there was in the same city a

Primate, to whom the last determination of all appeals, from all the provinces, in differences of the clergy, and the sovereign care of all the diocese, for sundry points of spiritual government, did belong. So that the *Patriarch*, as superior to the *Metropolitans*, was to have, under his jurisdiction, not any *one* single province, but a *whole diocese*, (in the old Roman notion of that word) consisting of many provinces. To him belonged the ordination of all the *Metropolitans* who were under him, as also the summoning them to councils—the *reforming* and *correcting* the misdemeanors they were guilty of—and from his judgment and sentence in things properly within his cognizance, there lay no appeal. To this I shall only add what Salmasius has noted—that as the *diocese*, which was governed by *Vicarius* had many provinces under it, so the *Præfectus Prætorio*, had several *dioceses* under him: and, in proportion to this, it probably was, that *patriarchs* were first brought in, who, if not superior to *primates* in *jurisdiction* and *power*, were yet in *honor*, by reason of the dignity of those cities, where their *sees* were fixed, as at Rome, Constantinople,

nople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem; a title and dignity which they retain to this day.

I shall conclude this letter with Dr. Cave's account of the inferiority and duties of Presbyters, in the primitive Church. He tells us "The next office to Bishops was that of Presbyters, to whom it belonged—to preach to the people—to administer baptism—to consecrate the Eucharist—and to be assistant to the Bishop both in public ministrations, and in dispatching the affairs of the Church. The truth is, the Presbyters of every great city were a kind of *ecclesiastical senate*, under the *care* and *presidency* of the Bishop, whose council and assistance he made use of in ruling those societies of Christians that were under his *charge* and *government*, and were accordingly reckoned next in place and power to him. They are thus described by St. Gregory in his Iambics.

—— οἱ τὰ δεύτερα

Θρονων λελοῖκοτες,

Λαῖ προεγροὶ Πρεσβύται

Σεμλὴ γερασία*.

* 'Εἰς εαυτόν. Corm. 23. p. 244. Tom. 2.

The venerable senate of Presbyters, that preside over the people, and possess the SECOND throne, i. e. the place next to the Bishop.

They were called *Clerici superioris loci*, and sometimes (unless we understand it of the *Chorepiscopi*) *Antistites in secundo ordine*; and, accordingly in churches, had *seats of eminency* placed for them, next to the Bishop's *throne**. Whereby was implied, says Zonaras, that they ought to use a proportionable care and providence towards the people, to inform and teach them, to direct and guide them, being appointed as *fellow-labourers* with, and *assistants* to the Bishop†.

But though Presbyters, by their *ordination*, had a *power* conferred on them to administer holy things, yet after that the Church was settled upon foundations of order and regularity, they did not usually exercise this *power*, within any *diocese*, without leave and authority from the Bishop, much less take upon them to *preach* in his presence. This custom (however it might be otherwise in the Eastern Church) we are sure was constantly observed

* Theod. Leg. 11. Tit. 39. de fid. Test. Lib. 10. Sidon. Apol. Lib. 4. Epist. 11. p. 96.

† In Can. 58. Apost.

in the Churches of Africa, till the time of Valerius, St. Augustine's predecessor in the See of Hippo. Valerius was a Greek, and, by reason of his little skill in the Latin tongue, unable to preach to the *edification* of the people, admitted St. Augustine, (whom he had lately ordained Presbyter) to preach before him. This, though it was ill resented by some Bishops in those parts, yet quickly became a precedent for other Churches to follow after, and has ever since been practised.

My next Letter shall contain the sentiments of some of our modern divines, both Lutheran and Calvinistic, on this subject.

I remain,

Your's, &c.

LETTER IV.

THE venerable and learned Dr. Cave, in treating of the persons who constituted the body of *The Primitive Church*, that the *first* and *principal* officer of the Church was the Bishop—that he was of a rank and dignity, a power and authority, much higher than that of Presbyters: that his peculiar work and principal duties were, to teach and instruct the people; to administer the sacraments; to absolve penitents; to eject and excommunicate obstinate and incorrigible offenders among his Presbyters, Deacons, or people; to *preside* in the assemblies of the clergy; to *ordain* Presbyters, Deacons, and other officers of the Church; to call them to account; to *suspend*, or deal with them according to the nature of the offence; to urge the observance of ecclesiastic laws; and, to appoint and institute such *indifferent* rites, as were for
the

the decent and orderly administration of his Churches. In short, according to the notion of his name he was a *σκόπος*, a *watchman*, and *sentinel*; and therefore, obliged *ἐπισκοπεῖν*, diligently and carefully to inspect and observe, to superintend and provide for, those that were under his charge. *This*,

Zonaras tells us, was implied in the Bishop's *throne* being placed *on high*, in the most eminent part of the Church, to denote his dignity, and how much it was his duty from thence to overlook, and very diligently to observe, the people that were under him.

These and many more were the unquestionable rights and duties of the episcopal office; but because *it* was very difficult and troublesome for one man to discharge, especially where the *παροικία*, or diocese (as we now call it) was any thing large, therefore upon the multiplying of Country Churches, it was thought proper to take in a *subordinate* sort of Bishops, called

CHOREPISCOPI,

Country; or, as amongst us, they have been termed *suffragan* Bishops. *Their* business was to superintend and inspect the Churches, in the country, that lay more remote from the

city, where the episcopal See was, and which the Bishop could not always inspect and oversee, in his own person.

These were the *Vicarii Episcoporum*, (as they are styled in Isidore's version of the *thirteenth Canon*, both of the *Arcyran*, and Neocæsarian council,) the Bishop's *deputies*, chosen out of the fittest and gravest persons.

In the *Canon* of the last mentioned *council*, they are said to be chosen, in imitation of the *seventy*. Not the *seventy* Elders which Moses took in to bear part of the government, (as some have glossed the words of that *Canon*,) but of the *seventy* Disciples, whom our LORD made choice of to send up and down the countries to preach the Gospel. Thus, both Zonaras and Balsamon understood it. And by reason of their great trust and care, are commanded to be esteemed *very honorable*. Their *authority* was much greater than that of the Presbyters, and yet much inferior to the Bishops. Bishops really they were, though their power was confined within narrow limits*. They were not allowed to *ordain* either Presbyters or Deacons, unless

* Concil. Antioch. Can. 10.

particularly

particularly licenced to do so by the Bishop of the diocese, though they might *ordain* the Sub-deacons, Readers, and other inferior officers under them. They were to be assistant to the Bishop: might be present at synods and councils; to many of which we find their subscriptions, and had power to give *letters of peace**, *i. e.* such letters whereby the Bishop of one diocese was wont to recommend any of his clergy to the Bishop of another, that so a friendly understanding and correspondence might be maintained between them; a privilege expressly denied to any mere Presbyter whatever. But lest this wandering employment of the Chorepiscopi should reflect any dishonor upon the episcopal office, there were certain Presbyters appointed in their room called, *περιόδευται* or *visitors*, often mentioned in the *antient canons* and *acts of councils*† who being confined to no certain place, were to go up and down the country, to observe and correct what was amiss. Those, without doubt, were the *ἐπιχωριοὶ Πρεσβυτεροί*, the *rural Presbyters*, mentioned in the thirteenth Canon of the Næcesarian council, and who

* Concil. Antioch. Can. 8.

† Concil. Laodic. Can. 57.

are

are there forbid to consecrate the *Eucharist* in the City Church, in the presence of the Bishop of the City Presbyters.

After what I have sent you from the writers of antiquity, from Archbishop Potter, Dr. Cave, &c. in vindication of our episcopal Church government, need I say any more? If this is necessary, read Bishop Stillingfleet's "Unreasonableness of Separation"—Read Chillingworth's "Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy demonstrated"—Strype's *Annals and Lives*—The writings of our first Reformed Bishops, and the controversial eminent divines of the Church of England, in the last century.—If not *already*, you will *then* be enabled to say, with one of those learned men, "If our Dissenters deny the Apostolical institution of episcopacy, and the superiority of Bishops over Presbyters; I do not see how they can defend the Apostolical institution of *the LORD's day*." Both are founded on the same authority: the unanimous tradition of all the Christian Churches in all their various ages and situations, confirmed by their universal practice and uniform doctrine for sixteen centuries.

Blondel,

Blondel, Salmasius and many other writers for Presbytery, are obliged to own that the rank and *order* of Bishops were always far above that of Presbyters.

Peter de Moulin, in his Book of the Pastoral office, written in defence of the Presbyterian government, allows that "Presently after the Apostles time, or even in their time, as ecclesiastic story witnesseth, it was ordained that, in every city, one of the Presbyters should be selected and called a Bishop, who should have pre-eminence over his colleagues, *to avoid confusion*, which often ariseth out of *equality*. And indeed, adds he, This form of government *all Churches, every where*, received."

Beza, in his Treatise of a Three-fold Episcopacy, *divine, human and satanical*, asserts concerning the *second*, (which we call Apostolical,) "That of this kind is to be understood whatsoever we read, concerning the authority of Bishops, in Ignatius, (whose sentiments I have wrote you) and other more ancient writers." And in a Letter he sent to Archbishop Cranmer, he paid the highest compliments of affection and honor to the Church of England.

The

The celebrated Zanchius says, "We do not disallow the fathers, in that after a divers way of dispensing the word, and governing the Church they multiplied divers orders of ministers. It was lawful so to do, seeing they did it for honest causes, appertaining, at that time, to the order, decency, and edification of the Church. For this reason, viz. That *the nurseries* for *dissentions* and *schisms* might be taken away, we think that those things which were ordained, before the council of Nice, concerning Archbishops; nay, as touching the *four* Patriarchs, may be excused and defended."

Among his reasons for approving of *the hierarchy* were,

1. The practice of the *Primitive Church*, presently after the Apostles time.
2. Because he thought it is his duty to have great regard to those *reformed* Churches, which *retained* both Bishops and Archbishops. And,
3. Because *all* the *reformed* Churches, although they had changed the names, yet in effect they had kept the authority, as where they had super-intendants, &c. And

"What

“What, continues Zanchius, can be shewed more certainly, out of the histories, out of the councils, and out the writings of *all* the *antient* fathers, than that those orders of ministers of which we have spoken, have been *ordained* and *received* in the Church, by the general consent of *all* Christian Commonwealths? And who then am I that I should presume to *reprove* that which *the whole church* hath *approved**?”

Mr. Calvin, in his institution of Christian religion, says, “*Quibus docendi munus injunctum erat, &c.*” Those to whom was committed the office of *teaching*, they called, all of them, Presbyters. These elected out of their number, in each city, one, to whom, in a special manner, they gave the title of Bishop, lest strife and contention, (as it commonly happeneth) should arise out of *equality*.” And

In his Epistles to Archbishop Cranmer, he thus addressed him, *Illustrissime Domine, et Ornatissime Præsul, &c. Most Illustrious Sir, and Most Honorable Prelate, and by me, heartily, revered.* And tells him, “That, if he might be serviceable to the Church of England, he

* See Strype's Annals, Vol. II. p. 653, 654.

would

would not think much of passing over ten seas for that purpose." And, in his Epistle to the King of Poland, he says of Patriarchs and Archbishops, "The ancient church did appoint Patriarchs and Primate in *every* province, that, by this bond of concord, the Bishops might the better be knit together."

In his book, "Of the Necessity of Reforming the Church," you may see how he stood affected on the subject of Episcopacy, from these words: "*Talem nobis Hierarchiam exhibeant,*" &c. "Let them give us such an Hierarchy, in which Bishops may be so above the rest, as they refuse not to be under CHRIST, and depend on him as their only head: that they maintain a brotherly society, &c. If then there be any that do not behave themselves with all reverence and obedience toward them, there is no *anathema*, but I confess them worthy of it."

When Calvin, Bullinger, and others of the most eminent and learned foreign divines wrote to King Edward VI. congratulating him on his establishment of religion in England, they not only offered to make him their defender, but also to have Bishops in all their Churches, as there were in England; and they
made

made him a tender of their services to assist, and unite the *whole* of the reformed churches together. Of this we are assured, on good authority, by Strype, in his Memorials of Archbishop Cranmer; and he farther informs us, that this propofal of Calvin, &c. to our King and Church, nettled exceedingly the learned at the council of Trent, who came to the knowledge of it by some of their private intelligencers; and they really thought that *all the heretics*, (as *they* called them,) *would now unite among themselves, and become one body, receiving the same discipline exercised in England*; which, if it should happen, and they should have heretical Bishops near them, in those parts, they concluded that Rome and her clergy would utterly fall. Whereupon, were sent two of their emissaries from Rotterdam into England, who were to pretend themselves Anabaptists, and preach against baptizing infants, and preach up *re-baptizing*, and a *fifth monarchy* upon earth. Besides this, one D. G. authorised by this same synod of Trent, dispatched a letter,* written in May

1549

* This letter, the historian says, was afterwards printed. Sir Henry Sidney first met with it in Queen Elizabeth's closet, among some

1549, from Delft in Holland, to the Popish deprived Bishops here, of whom Gardener and Bonner were two, signifying the coming of these pretended Anabaptists, and that *they* should *receive* them and *cherish* them, and take their parts, if they should chance to receive any checks; telling them that it was left to them to assist in this cause, and to some others, whom they knew to be well affected to Mother Church.

Unhappily for Britain, and for the Protestant religion, the Bishops Gardiner and Bonner, so artfully and indefatigably watched the correspondence of our clergy and Calvin, that in a short time, they had all his letters intercepted, and so prevented that glorious coalition of the reformed Churches which was the subject of them, and his favourite wish.

In a paper written by Archbishop Abbot, and found among Archbishop Usher's manuscripts, we have this unfortunate circumstance authenticated. "Perusing some pa-

some papers of Queen Mary. He transcribed it into a book of his, called, "The Romish Policies." It came afterwards into the hands of Archbishop Usher, and was copied thence by Sir James Ware. Vid. Strype ut supra, p. 207, 208. And from p. 409, to 413, you will find more of Calvin's attachment to episcopacy.

pers.

pers, says Archbishop Abbot, of our predecessor, Matthew Parker, we find that John Calvin, and others, of the Protestant Churches of Germany and elsewhere, would have had episcopacy *established* among them, if *permitted*. And whereas Calvin had sent a letter in King Edward VI's reign, to have conferred with the clergy of England, about some things *to this effect*, two Popish Bishops, viz. Gardiner and Bonner, intercepted the same, whereby Mr. Calvin's overture perished; and he received an answer from Gardiner and Bonner, as if it had been from the reformed divines of those times, wherein they *checked* him, and *sighted* his proposals. From which time, John Calvin, and the Church of England, were at variance in several points, respecting Church government, which otherwise, through God's mercy, had been qualified, if those papers of his proposals had been discovered to Queen Elizabeth, during John Calvin's life. But being not discovered until, or about, the sixth year of her reign, her Majesty much lamented they were not found sooner, which she expressed before her council, in the presence of her great friends, Sir Henry

Sidney and Sir William Cecil*. So much for the very learned and immortal Calvin's sentiments on the propriety, antiquity, and universality, of Churches being under an episcopal government.

The amiable and accomplished Mrs. Macaulay, in her spirited History of England, remarks, that "The Dutch complimented, very highly, Bishop Carleton and *our* other Church dignitaries, who attended the famous synod of Dort, on the *excellency of the constitution of the Church of England*, and regretted that the conveniency, or civil polity, of their state, did not admit of the same system of ecclesiastical subordination†.

But Bishop Carleton himself, has been so good as to leave us a *particular* account of his animated vindication of episcopacy in that synod, and of the high respect and veneration in which *our* ecclesiastical constitution was considered by all the literati of the Reformed Churches, who were there assembled. "When we, (says the Bishop, that is, when we, the English clergymen) were to

* Strype's Life of Archbishop Parker, p. 70—and Vid. *ibid.* His proposal, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, to establish episcopacy in all the Reformed Churches.

† Mrs. Macaulay's Hist. of England, Vol. I. page 117.

yield our consent to the Belgic confession at Dort, I made open protestation in the synod, that whereas in that confession, there was inserted a strange conceit of the parity of ministers to be instituted by CHRIST, I declared *our* dissent utterly in that point. I shewed, that by CHRIST, a parity was never instituted in the Church; and herein I appealed to the judgment of antiquity, and to the judgment of any learned man now living; and craved herein to be satisfied, if any man of learning could speak to the contrary. [My Lord of Salisbury is my witness; and so are all the rest of our company, who spake also in the same cause.] To *this* there was no answer made by any. Whereupon we conceived that they yielded to the truth of the protestation. And somewhat I can say of my own knowledge, for I had conferences with divers of the best learned in that synod. I told them that the cause of all their troubles (viz. of all the dissensions occasioned and fomented in the Dutch Churches by the Arminians, &c.) was this: that they had not Bishops among them, who, by their authority, might repress turbulent spirits that broached novelties. Their answer was, " That they did much *honor* and

reverence the good *order* and discipline of the Church of England; and, with all their hearts would be glad to have it established among them; but that could not be hoped for in their state. Their hope was, that seeing they could not do as they *desired*, GOD would be merciful to them, if *they did what they could.*"

The truth is, continues the Bishop, they groan under the burthen of *ministerial parity*, and would gladly be eased of it, if they could. This is well known to the rest of my associates there*.

This narrative of the pious and eminently learned Bishop Carlton is equal to fifty additional arguments in favor of Church government by Bishops, and of their antiquity, rank, and power; for it contains not only the opinion of that great and good prelate who gave it, but also the concurring testimonies of those *selected* and illustrious divines who accompanied him from England, and of the most distinguished and *best learned* clergymen who had been *chosen*, by the foreign Reformed Churches, to represent them, at that celebrated synod of Dort.

* Vid. Bishop Carleton's Examín. &c. p. 111, 112. Lond. 1626.

I might here proceed, and lengthen out my Letter to a folio volume, with proofs of the antiquity, universality, and propriety of Church government by Bishops, from the writings of that *cloud of witnesses* which is before you in this and my late Letters, from the literary works of our venerable reformers, and martyrs of the Church of England; and from their able and faithful successors, who have done honour to their country, to Christianity, and to episcopacy, by their immortal publications on this with other subjects: but I hope, to one of your reasonable and candid disposition, what I have sent you, and what I have referred you to, will perfectly satisfy you.

In a few days I shall transmit you my defence of our Liturgy. Till then, and always, believe me,

Your's, &c.

LETTER V.

I AM now, my dear Sir, to prove, agreeably to your desire, and from my regard for the character and interest of the Church of England, that every Church, both Jewish and Christian, have had Liturgies, from their earliest periods; and that our English Liturgy is so far from having any thing of a Popish or sinful turpitude in it, that every part of its prayers, praises, doctrines, &c. are truly *primitive*, scripturally pure, and prior, in their composition, to the existence of Popery.

In the JEWISH CHURCH,
God himself commanded various *forms* of prayer to be used by his people in their public assemblies.

“ On this wise—or thus—shall Aaron and his sons bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, *The LORD bless thee, and keep thee!*

The

*The LORD make his face shine upon thee! The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace!**

Here the *priest* is expressly ordered to pray for the people in a most particular *form* of prayer, and not in an *extempore* effusion of his own words.

So in the expiation of uncertain murder, the people are commanded by GOD to say, "*Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy people Israel, whom Thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people Israel's charge!*"†

At their paying their third year's tithes, they were positively commanded to use this *form* of words: "*I have brought away the hallowe'd things out of mine house, &c. Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which Thou hast given unto us, Thou swearest unto our father, the land that flows with milk and honey!*"‡

David, by inspiration from GOD, and in dutiful imitation of him, appointed the book of Psalms for the public service of the Jewish Church. For in the *titles* of them we find that several of them were particularly recommended

* Numb. vi. 23, 24, 25, 26.

† Deuteronomy.

‡ Deuteronomy.

to the choirs of the priests and Levites, for parts of their vocal service; some to the sons of Korah, others to Asaph, others to Jeduthun, and a great many to the master of the music. And though others have no title at all, as particularly the 96th and 105th, yet we find that they were delivered by David, into the hands of Asaph and his brethren," for *forms of public prayer and praise to God*.*.

Hezekiah, the king, commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD, with the *words* of David, and of Asaph the seer†.

Ezra renewed the same Liturgy, when the foundations of the second temple were laid; For the priests and Levites were then ordered "to praise the LORD after the *ordinance* of David king of Israel," and accordingly "They sung *together, by course*, in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD, because he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever towards Israel‡."

Thus you see the Jews had several *forms* prescribed them in their public worship. And that they used a Liturgy in our SAVI-

* 1 Chron. xvi. 7.

† 2 Chron. xxix. 30.

‡ Ezra, iii. 10, 11.

OUR'S time, not only their modern Rabbins do assert, but Philo himself, who lived not long after, makes mention of "The *holy prayers* that were offered by the priests, in the time of sacrifice." And the Samaritan Chronicle makes mention of a book in the year of the world 4713, "which contained those *forms* of prayers and the *songs* that were *always* used, before their sacrifices."

The Jewish doctors, and other writers of that ancient people, inform us of several *forms* of *human composition*, as well as of *divine institution*, that were used in their temple and synagogues, both before, during, and after, our SAVIOUR'S incarnation. And so far was JESUS from disapproving either those *forms* of prayer established in their Church, or even that form which John the Baptist taught his disciples, that, in the earliest infancy of

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH,

He prescribed a *form* of *prayer* to his own disciples, which is what has been ever since called "*The LORD'S Prayer*."

It was the custom of the Jewish doctors, as the learned Lightfoot hath proved, to teach their disciples a *form* of prayer as the badge

badge and livery of their discipleship. According to this custom, John the Baptist, it seems, taught his disciples a *form* of his own composition. This the disciples of Jesus being informed of, requested of him, as St. Luke has it, to "teach *them* to pray as John taught *his* disciples," *i. e.* teach them a *form* of prayer, not a *directory* of prayer, as is evident from this custom of the Jewish doctors, and from the reason of the thing; for neither they nor John's disciples could be ignorant how to pray, since, as Jews, they had their regular stated hours of daily prayer, the third, the sixth, and the ninth. Jesus immediately complied with their request, and said, "*When ye pray, say, Our Father,*" &c.

This *form* of our SAVIOUR's compilation is proved, by our learned Gregory, to be collected out of the forms of prayer which were then used among the Jews, in whose book of Prayers, the several parts and clauses of it are extant, almost *verbatim*, to this day. But certainly Jesus, if he disapproved of the Jewish *forms* of prayer as culpable or sinful, because of human composition, would never have collected his own prayer out of them. And if our SAVIOUR hath not only given us
a form

a *form* of prayer, but hath also given it under such circumstances as do plainly signify his approbation of other forms, is it not astonishing ignorance or impudence in those Dissenters, who deny that *the LORD's Prayer* was meant as a *form* at all; or, at least, for a standing *form*, in the Christian Church, and therefore they shall not use it as such, nor any other *forms*? Their objections and little despicable scholastic quibblings on Matt. vi. 9. where our SAVIOUR's injunction is εἰτως ἐν προσευχῇ, *pray thus*, have been long ago unanswerably replied to, by the late Dr. Scott, and other eminent clergymen of our Church. All I shall say further, in proof of its being a *form*, and not a *directory* of prayer is, that those venerable fathers and primitive Churches which flourished in the ages nearest to the Apostolic, and were much better judges than our Dissenters what was then done, did always use the LORD's Prayer as a *form* in their *Liturgies*, and believed themselves sacredly obliged to do so.

Tertullian, who lived about one hundred years after the Apostolic age, speaking of *this* prayer, tells us that "*Novis Discipulis, Novi Testamenti Christus Novam Orationis Formam determi-*

determinavit ;" that is, " That CHRIST hath instituted a new *form* of *prayer*, for his new disciples."

St. Cyprian, who lived in a period almost as early, accounts our SAVIOUR's giving a *form* of *prayer* among those divine and wholesome precepts which he imposes on his people. And a little after he says, "*Oremus, Fratres Dilectissimi, sicut Magister docuit, &c.*" Let us pray as our Master hath taught us, "*Let the Father own the words of his Son. And since we have an Advocate with the Father, when we ask pardon for our sins, let us ask it in the words of our Advocate; and how much more shall we prevail for what we ask in CHRIST's name, if we ask it in His prayer ?**"

St. Austin tells us, that in his time, " The Lord's Prayer was said at the *altar*, and that almost every Church concluded with the LORD'S Prayer.†"

St. Chrysostom speaking of those who would not forgive injuries, &c. says, " When thou sayest, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive*: if thou dost not forgive, thou beggest

* Cyp. De Orat. Domini.

† Ho. nil. 42, 50. Ep. 59. Ad Paul. Qu. 5.

GOD to deny thee forgiveness.*" This is a plain proof that the LORD's Prayer was a *form* of ordinary use in his age; and that it was then thought matter of duty to use it syllabically, is evident from what follows. "You will say," continues St. Chrysostom, "I dare not pray, forgive me as I forgive, but only forgive me." To which having answered, "That however he said it, GOD would forgive him as he forgave." He concludes thus: "Do not imagine that you are secured from this danger, by not pronouncing *all* the prayer; do not therefore curtail it, but as it is instituted, so use it; that so the necessity of daily using the whole may compel thee to forgive thy brother.

And St. Gregory expressly affirms, "That the Apostles themselves did always, at the consecration of the Eucharist, make use of LORD's *Prayer*.†"

Thus it is clear by these, and many other authorities, which we have from the learned of every Church and age, that the LORD's Prayer has been always considered as a *form*,

* St. Chrysost. De Simulat.

† Ep: L. 7. C. 6.

that

that it has never been thought by any Church, for fifteen hundred years past, a mere *temporary institution*, till the Dissenters of England found it out to be such; and surely, it is a proof that they are capable of the highest presumption, when they pretend dogmatically to determine, in this, as in other matters, against the constant belief, and constant practice of the whole Churches of CHRIST, for so many centuries, without the least warrant so to do from our SAVIOUR, from his Apostles, or from any authority but that of the dæmons of dissention, or the dunces of fanaticism.

Having now proved, from what I have said, and what writers I have referred you to, that *forms* of prayer have been used from the earliest constitution of both the Jewish and Christian Churches, I proceed to give you a more full and historical account of them, from the practice of the Christian Church, in its *primitive* periods.

That in the first age there was a gift of praying *extempore*, by immediate inspiration, seems highly probable; both from what the Apostolic discourses of “praying in unknown languages,” 1 Cor. xiv. and from what St.

Chrysostom

Chrysoſtom aſſerts concerning it,* viz. "That together with thoſe *miraculous gifts* which were then poured out, there was a gift of praying, which was called by the Apoſtle a *ſpirit*, by which he, who was endued with it, poured out prayers for all the people:" and while this gift continued, perhaps, which, how long it was, is very uncertain, there might no other form be uſed in public worſhip, in thoſe places eſpecially, where it abounded, but only that of the LORD'S Prayer. It may be in imitation of this gift upon which, even in the Apoſtles time, the Chriſtians were apt to over-value themſelves. Some might affect to pray *extempore*, after it was wholly expired; but it is highly probable, that upon the ceaſing or abatement of it, it was, in moſt places, immediately ſupplied by *forms* of prayer, which were compoſed either of the words, or according to the method and manner of thoſe *inſpired* prayers by Apoſtolical perſons that heard and remembered them. "For," as the ſame St. Chryſoſtom goes on, "we being ignorant of many things which are profitable for us, do aſk many things which are unprofitable, and

* Chryſoſt. in Rom. viii. 26.

therefore

therefore this gift of prayer was given to some one person that was there, (*i. e.* in the congregation,) who asked for all that which was profitable for the universal Church, and taught others to do so;" that is, to form prayers according to these *inspired* models*.

I do not assert that there were no other prayers used in public, but only forms, either in, or presently after, the age of the Apostles; but it seems highly probable that, even from the Apostolic age, some part, at least, of the public worship, was performed in *forms* of prayer. If this is allowed, we have all the reason in the world to conclude that these *forms* were composed, according to the pattern of those primitive *inspired* prayers. Now that there were *forms* from the Apostolic age seems to be indisputably certain, because, so far as we can find, there never was any dispute among Christians, till our Dissenters thought of it, concerning the lawfulness of praying in Church by a *form*. If this mode of prayer had been introduced, after the primitive ages, it would have been a most observable innovation upon the primitive Christianity, and that in such a public matter of

* Chrysost. in Rom. viii. 26.

fact, that every Christian could not but have taken notice of it. It appears very strange, if not incredible, that such an open and notorious innovation should be passively and tacitly admitted into the Church, without the least contest or opposition. Indeed some trifling innovations crept in, very early, without any great opposition; but none of such a public cognizance as this. Unless the whole Christian world had been fast asleep, it is hardly supposable they would ever have admitted such a remarkable alteration in their public worship, as from praying *extempore*, to pray by a *form*, without the least contradiction. If, therefore, praying by a *form*, were an innovation upon their primitive worship, it was certainly the most lucky and fortunate one that ever was of that kind, there being not one innovation, besides it, of that public nature, but what hath always found powerful adversaries to withstand it. But not to insist upon probabilities, we will enquire into the matters of fact. And

First, We have those *three* antient *Liturgies*, which are attributed to St Peter, St. Mark, and St. James.

Though all of them have been greatly corrupted by later ages, yet they are unquestionably, as to the purer parts of them, of very early antiquity, and probably, even from the Apostolic age. There are many things in them which have a strong relish of the simplicity and piety of that age. That of St. James, in particular, was of great authority in the Church of Jerusalem, whereof he was the first Bishop, in St. Cyril's time, who wrote a Comment on it*. Besides, it is declared by Proclus, Archbishop of Constantinople,† and the sixth *general council*,‡ to be St. James's own composition. This is a plain argument, of the great antiquity, if not apostolicity of it. For St. Cyril flourished in the year 350, and, as St. Jerom observes§, composed this Comment on St. James's Liturgy, in his younger years. It is not to be imagined he would have commented on it, had it not been of great authority in the Church of Jerusalem; and how could it have obtained any great authority,

* Cyril. Catech. Mystag. 5.

† Alat. De Liturg. S. Jacob.

‡ Concil. Trull. C. 32.

§ S. Jerom. De Scrip. in Cyril.

had it not been long before received, that is, at least, seventy or eighty years? Supposing, then, that St. Cyril wrote this Comment anno 347, as it is very probable*, and that this Liturgy had then been received in the Church of Jerusalem but seventy or eighty years (and less cannot well be supposed), it could not be above 170 years, after the Apostolic age, that this Liturgy was received in the Christian Church of Jerusalem. And

That there are *forms* of worship in it as ancient as the Apostles, seems highly probable. For, first, there is all that *form*, with a very small variation from that in our Liturgy, called "*Sursum corda*"—"Lift up your hearts! We lift them up unto the Lord! It is meet and right so to do—It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty to praise thee, &c. Therefore, with angels and arch-angels," &c. All which is in St. Cyril's Comment†. This is a strong argument that it was more ancient than he. Besides, the same *forms* are in those ancient Liturgies of Rome and Alexandria, and in the constitutions of St. Clemens‡,

* Vid. Dr. Cave's Life of St. Cyril.

† Cyril. Catech. Mystag. 5.

‡ Constit. Clem. L. 8. C. 22.

which are universally allowed to be of great antiquity. And

St. Cyprian, who was living, within one hundred years after the Apostles, mentions it as a *form* that was, then, used and received in the Church*. The Priest, saith he, *in the preface before the prayer, prepares the minds of the people, by saying, "Lift up your hearts!" That so while they answer, "We lift them up unto the Lord!" they may be admonished, that they ought to think of nothing but the Lord.*

Lastly, St. Austin tells us, that this *Sursum corda*, which is the name and title of the whole following *form*, and consequently includes it, even as *te deum* and *venite exultemus* do the hymns that go under that title, are *verba ab ipsorum apostolorum temporibus petita*, i. e. *words derived from the very age of the Apostles*.—The same is asserted by Nicephorus, of the Trisagium in particular†.

It is also evident that, even from that primitive age, there was a certain *form* prescribed in *baptism*. This appears from those solemn questions and answers that were made by the

* Cyp. De Orat. Dominic.

† Hist. L. 18. C. 53.

priests, and returned by the person to be baptized. For

Tertullian speaking of *baptism* tells us, *That the soul is not established by the washing, but by the answer**. And

St. Cyprian expressly calls it *Interrogatio Baptismi*, "The questioning of Baptism".† This clearly shews that there were certain *questions* and *answers* given and returned in *baptism*, and what the *question* was, may be guessed by the *answer*, which was ἀποτάττομαι τῷ Σατανᾷ καὶ τοῖς ἔργοις, &c. *I renounce Satan and his works and pomps, &c.*‡ And, to the same purpose, Tertullian writes, "*In the Church, and under the hand of the priest, we protest to renounce the devil, his pomps and works* ||. This form of question and response,

Origen, who lived not long after, derives from CHRIST, or his disciples. *Who is there, saith he, can easily explain the reason of some words, and gestures, and orders, and interrogations, and answers, that are used in baptism, which yet we observe and fulfil according as we first took them up, they being delivered to us,*

* Tertul. de Resurrect. Carn.

† Clem. Constit. Lib. 7.

† Cyp. 76. 80.

|| Coron. Milit.

by tradition from our great High Priest, or his disciples.*

If it be objected that this is no *form of prayer*, I answer, That it is a limiting the Minister from exercising his own *gift*, in performing his ministerial office; and if in performing it he might be limited to a *form of question*, why not to a *form of prayer*? If the Church thought fit not to leave him at liberty to question *extempore* in *baptism*, it is very improbable it would leave him at liberty to pray *extempore* in *public*, there being as great a necessity to prescribe him a *form* for the latter, as for the former. But that, *de facto*, there were *forms of prayer*, as well as of question and answer, used in *baptism*, is not only affirmed in the *constitutions* of St. Clement, but some of the prayers also are *there* inserted †.

It is, besides, indisputable that the Church did, very early, use a *Liturgy*, in her public worship, from the denominations which the *primitive* writers give to the public prayers—such as *the common prayers* ‡, *the constituted prayers* ||,

* In Numer. Homil. 5. † Clem. Constit. Lib. 7.

‡ Just. Martyr. Apol. 2. p. 93.—Ignat. Ep. ad Magn.

|| Orig. Cont. cels. L. 6.

and

and the *solemn prayers* *. This last was the title by which the Heathens, then, distinguished and expressed their public forms of prayer †, and consequently in the language of that age, must signify a *public form*.

As for that particular *form* of prayers so often used in *our Liturgy*, "Glory be to the Father," &c. St. Basil fetches the original of it, *ἐκ τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων περὶ αἰδέσεως*, from the tradition of the Apostles; and he cites this doxology from St. Clemens the Apostles Scholar, and from Dionysius of Alexandria‡, who was living anno 200.—And Clemens of Alexandria, who lived anno 160, sets down these words, as the Christian's *form* of praising GOD, *αἰνῶντες τῷ μόνῳ πατρὶ, καὶ υἱῷ σὺν τῷ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι§*, *Praising the FATHER, and the SON, with the HOLY GHOST*.—We know there are some people who attribute the compofure of this Eucharistical hymn to the rise of the Arian sect; yet from these authorities, it is much more probable that it was, long before

* Cypr. De Laps. Serm. 14.

† Vid. Ovid. Lib. 6. De Fastis.—Statius Papin Lib. 4. Senec. in Oedip. Act. 2. Sect. 2.

‡ Basil De Sp. S. c. 27. et 29.

§ Clemen Alex. Pædag.

composed and used, in the public worship of the Church: for the Arians are severely re-proved by the orthodox fathers, for altering this ancient form into—*Glory be to the FATHER, by the SON, and in the HOLY GHOST.**

A great part of the *primitive worship* consisted of *hymns* and *doxologies*, which could no longer be *extempore*, than while the miraculous gifts continued, after which it became necessary that they should be composed into *set forms*.

Tertullian tells us, that their *Catus antelucani*, or *Meetings before day-light*, were *ad canendum Christo ut Deo*—"To sing to CHRIST as GOD."†

And Lucian, before him, thus describes the practice of Christians that they did ἀσῖτοι διαμενεῖν σπὶ παννύχως ὕμνος ἐπαγρυπνῶντες, *spend whole nights in watching and singing of Psalms ‡*. And

Justin Martyr, speaking of the Christian life, tells us ὕμνος τε καὶ ψαλμοὺς καὶ ᾠδὰς καὶ αἶνον ρητέον, *We are to sing hymns, and psalms, and odes, and praise §*.

* Theod. Hist. Eccles. Lib. 2. c. 24.

† Tertul. Apologet. c. 2.

‡ Lucian Philop.

§ Justin Mart Epist. ap Zen. et Heren.

LETTER VI.

NO person of learning can deny that in Pliny's and in Lucian's time, the Christians used set *forms* of hymns, not only of divine, but also of human composition. For so

Pliny himself informs us,* *That early in the morning it was their manner to sing, by turns, a hymn to CHRIST as to GOD*—And this hymn must, surely, have been of human composition, for there was no hymn to CHRIST in Scripture of such a length as to take up a considerable part of their public service.

Besides, Eusebius acquaints us, That very early there were various psalms and odes *composed by Christians*, concerning the divinity of CHRIST;† and that Paulus Samositanus was condemned for suppressing those

* Plin. Epist. Lib. 10 Epist. 97.

† Euseb. Hist. L. 5.

hymns that were made in the honor of CHRIST, *as being the compositions of men, of late days,** though, in all probability, those hymns were composed within much less than one hundred years after the apostolical age.—As for this hymn, which Pliny speaks of, it was still earlier; for it could not be much above ten years, after the death of St. John, that Pliny gave this account of the Christians to Trajan the Emperor, and, therefore, the hymn he mentions in that Epistle, must certainly have been *composed and used*, in the very age of the Apostles.

Much about the same time, Lucian takes notice of *prayer*, which they always used in their public worship ἀπὸ πατρὸς ἀρχαμενος, *Beginning from the Father*, which, without a doubt, was *The LORD's Prayer*:—And of a *famous hymn, added to the end of their public service,†* which, in all probability, was the hymn that Pliny mentions.

Since, therefore, the primitive worship did, in a great measure, consist of hymns, which were *forms of praise* intermixed with *prayer*, and some of these of human composition, this is

* Euseb. Hist. L. 7.

† Lucian Philop.

an evident testimony of the primitive use of *forms*—And that they, who made no scruple of praying by *form* in verse, could not think it *unlawful, as our Dissenters do*, to pray by *form* in prose.

That praying in metre, or *composed* hymns, was a very early practice, in the Christian Church, appears from the *Apostolic constitutions*, where it is enjoined—ὁ λαὸς τὰ ἀκροστίχια ἀποψαλλέτω, *Let the people sing the verses which answer, adversely, to one another.** This way of *singing* was so very ancient, that Eusebius† urges it as an argument to prove the Essenes Christians, because they sung, by turns, answering one another. But how could they thus answer to one another, in their hymns and prayers, unless they had constant *forms* of prayer?

But that they had such *forms* of responsal in prayer is evident, because, when Julian, for the credit of *Gentilism*, would needs dress it up, τῇ τάξει τῆς χριστιανῶν θρησκείας,‡ *After the order of the Christian worship*. One thing wherein he sought to imitate it was ἀχαῖς τεταγμέναις, *in their constituted prayers*; that is,

* Constit. Apost. L. 2. c. 5.

† Euseb. Hist. Eccles. L. 2. c. 17.

‡ Sol. Hist. L. 5. c. 15.

not in having constituted forms of prayer, for that the Heathens had before, but in having *such constituted forms*, as the Christians had, which was, as Nazienzen explains it, ἀχὼν τυπον ἐν μέρει, *a form of prayer to be said in parts**.

Nicephorus derives this way of praying *in parts*, from Ignatius, who was a scholar of the Apostles†; all which testimonies must, to any person that is unprejudiced, prove equal to a demonstration, of the great antiquity of *forms*.

That in Constantine's time the Church used public *forms* of prayer, we are assured by Eusebius‡, where he tells us of Constantine's composing "*Godly prayers for the use of his soldiers*;" and elsewhere informs us, particularly, what the prayer was—" *We acknowledge thee, O God, alone,*" &c§. which is a plain evidence that it was a *set form* of words.

It is objected that this *form* was composed only for the use of his soldiers, and that Constantine's composing it is a proof, that, at that time, there were no *public forms* in the

* Nazian. Orat. 1. p. 102.

† Niceph. Lib. 13. c. 8.

‡ Euseb. de Laud. Constant.

§ Euseb. de Vit. Constant.

Church; for if there had, what need Constantine have composed one? I answer, that this *form*, indeed, was composed, only for his Heathen soldiers. As for his Christian soldiers, the historian tells us, that he gave them liberty to go to church*. All, therefore, that can be properly objected to this branch of our arguments is, that the Christian Church had no *form* of prayers, for Heathen soldiers, which is no great wonder; for if they had, it is very unlikely that the Heathen soldiers would have used it. But it is evident, that the Christian Church had *forms*, at that period, because Eusebius calls the prayers which Constantine used, in his court, ἐκκλησίας θεῶν τροπον, *according to the manner of the Church of God*, ἄχας ἐνθέσµους †, *authorised prayers*. This is the same title which he gave to that *form* of prayers which he made for his Heathen soldiers ‡, and therefore if by the *authorised prayers*, which he prescribed for his soldiers, he meant a *form of prayers*, as it is certain he did, then by the *authorised prayers* which he used in his court, *after the manner of the Church*, he

* Euseb. de Vit. Constant. c. 19.

† Ibid. c. 17.

‡ Ibid. c. 19.

must

must mean a *form of prayer* also: and since he had a *form of prayers* in his court, *after the manner of the Church*, then the *Church* must have had a *form of prayers* too.

Thus, for the first, second, and third centuries, sufficient testimony hath been given of the use of *public forms* of prayer. After this period, without insisting upon St. Basil's, St. Chrysostom's, and St. Ambrose's, Liturgies, which are unquestionably of great antiquity, we have undeniable authorities for the use of *public forms*.

St. Chrysostom, for example, in one of his Homilies, says καὶ γὰρ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐνεργεμένων ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐν μετανοίᾳ κείναι καὶ πειρᾷ τῆς ἱερέως καὶ παρ αὐτῶν γίνονται εὐχαὶ καὶ πάντες μίαν λέγουσι εὐχὴν, εὐχὴν τὴν ἐλὲς γέμεσαν. *For those who are possessed with a devil, and those who are under penance, common prayers are made both by the people and priest, and we all say one and the same prayer, the prayer which is so full of mercy* *. And then he goes on and tells us how when the priest had prayed for the people, that is, in that primitive form of dismissal, *the Lord be with you!* They prayed again for him, in these words, *and with thy spirit!*

* Chrysost. 2 ad Cor. Hom. 18.

It is probable that the people of the Christian Church, were not at first so very strictly limited to one constant form of Liturgy, but that upon occasion they might intermingle other *forms*, either of their own or other mens composition. But in process of time this liberty became very prejudicial to religion: for, by this means the prayers of *heretics* were often mingled with the *public offices*, and as might naturally be expected, many unadvised and ill-composed *forms* were introduced into the public worship. Of this, St. Austin complains. *Multi irruunt in preces non solum ab imperitis loquacibus, sed etiam ab hereticis compositas, et, per ignorantiae, simplicitatem non eas valentes discernere utuntur eis, arbitantes quod bonae sint: "Many there are, speaking of the office of baptism, who take up prayers at random, which are composed not only by unskilful persons, but also by heretics, and being incapable through their ignorance and simplicity to discern what they are, make use of them from a supposition that they are very good *."*

To prevent this great inconvenience, the Church was obliged, by degrees, to limit and restrain this liberty. For this purpose, the

* Aust. de Baptis. Cont. Donat. Lib. 6.

Council of Laodicea, which was held about the year 314, or as others think, 364, made a *Canon* περὶ τῆς τῆν αὐτὴν λειτουργίας των ευχῶν παντοτε καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἑννὰ ταῖς καὶ ταῖς ἐσπέραις οφείλειν γινεσθαι *. *About using the same office of prayers, in the morning and evening, that is, that they should not bring in new forms at their pleasure, into the public worship, either of their own or other mens' composition, as they had done before, but always confine themselves to one and the same Liturgy.*

Not only Zonaras †, and Balsamon ‡, but Smeſtumnuus §, and all the Presbyterian commissioners at the Savoy ||, understood by this *canon*, that the Primitive Christians were not to use any other prayers in the public service, but such as had been constantly received by the Church. And from the 15th and 19th canon of this council, it is certain the above canon is to be understood of the received forms; as in the 15th, they forbid *that any should go up into the desk to sing, or call the psalm, but only the appointed singers who were*

* Concil Laod. c. 18.

† Zonar. In Concil. Laod. c. 18.

‡ Balsam. ibid.

§ Smeſt. Anf. to Remon. p. 7.

|| Grand Debate, p. 11.

to sing out of the public parchments. In these only, the received hymns were inserted, for so, in the 59th Canon, they positively forbid, *to call the psalms of private persons* *. Before the session of this council, they took the same liberty to introduce new hymns into the public service of their own composition, or of other mens, as they had done to introduce new prayers; and not only so, but any one who would, was allowed to *call the hymn*: so Tertullian tells us, *Post aquam manualet et lumina, ut quisquis de Scripturis sanctis, vel de proprio ingenio potest et vocatur in medium Deo Canere.* *After they have washed their hands and lighted the candles, any one is called forth to sing to GOD, as he is able, either out of the Scriptures, or by his own gift of composition* †.

The consequence of this liberty was afterwards found to be as prejudicial to religion as that of introducing new prayers; the Council, therefore, thought fit to restrain it; and with this view they forbid, in the 15th Canon, the introduction of new psalms into the public worship; and in the 18th they forbid the introducing new prayers, there having been the

* Concil. Laod. c. 15, 18, 19.

† Tertul. Apologet; c. 39.

same liberty and the same ill consequence in both.

They then, in the 19th Canon direct, *That after the Homily, the prayers should be said for the Catechumeni; and when they were gone, the prayers for such as were under penance: and when they have received the imposition of hands, and are departed, then let the three prayers for the faithful be offered up; the first softly, or every man to himself; the second and the third aloud.* This is a convincing and clear argument that their meaning is to direct to the use of their *stated forms* of prayer, for the above-mentioned occasions. How else could the congregation say the *first* of the *three* prayers for the *faithful* to themselves, and the other *two* aloud, if they were not well known *forms*, which they had learned by heart, and were constantly used to?

After this, there being, as St. Austin complains, very great disorders in the African Churches, through the ill composed and *heretical* prayers which the ministers foisted into their public worship, and in which as it seems the FATHER was sometimes mentioned for the SON, and the SON for the FATHER, *it was ordained*, in the third council of Carthage,

age,

age *, that none in their prayers should name the FATHER for the SON, or the SON for the FATHER, but that when they came to the altar, they should direct their prayers to the FATHER. *Et quicumque sibi preces aliunde describit non eis utatur, nisi prius eas cum instructionibus fratribus contulerit, i. e. and whosoever shall write out prayers for himself from elsewhere, or from any book that hath not been publicly received and allowed, (for what else can be meant by aliunde?) he shall not presume to use them, till he hath first consulted about them with his more learned brethren.* Is not this a plain evidence that they used forms before? How otherwise could they have written them out from elsewhere, or from other men's compositions? Whereas therefore, they had liberty before to add new forms as they pleased, to the received Liturgy, they are so far restrained by this council as not to do it without the advice and approbation of their more learned brethren. But still this restriction being found insufficient to prevent universally the ill consequences of their former liberty, it was ordained, a few years after, in the council of

* Concil. Carth. 3. c. 12.

Mila*, *That those prayers which had been approved of in the council, whether prefaces or commendations, or impositions of hands, should be used by all; and that none should be said in the Church but such as had been treated of by the more prudent, or permitted in the Synod, lest any thing contrary to the faith should be inserted, either through ignorance or want of care.*

These indeed were but provincial councils, and therefore in themselves could oblige no farther than their particular provinces; yet the very canon above cited, out of the *first* of them †, is taken into *the collections of the canons of the Catholic Church*, being the 122 therein. Besides, this collection was received and established in the general council of Chalcedon ‡, anno 451. By which establishment the whole Christian Church was obliged to the use of Liturgies, so far as the authority of the general council extended.

Then in the year 541, these canons are made Imperial Laws, by the Emperor Justinian, who enacted § “ That the canons of

* Concil. Milev. c. 12.

† Concil. Laod. c. 18.

‡ Concil. Chalc. c. 1.

§ Justin. Novel. 131. c. 1.

those four general councils of Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon, should oblige, as far as the empire did extend."

Of what authority the use of *formed* Liturgies were in this Emperor's time, and long before, may be easily collected from his novels. He there complains of the remissness of some Bishops, because they did not take care to enforce the observance of the Sacred Canons, and tells us that he had received several complaints against the Clergy and some Bishops, that they did not live according to the Divine Canons, that some of them μήτε αὐτὴν τῆς ἁγίας προκομιδῆς καὶ τῆς ἁγίας βαπτίσματος προσευχὴν ὀπισταμενον, *were not acquainted with the prayer of the holy oblation and holy baptism* *; and then he declares that, for the future, he was resolved to punish the transgressors of the canons. If this had been done before, saith he, ἕκαστος ἐσπένδαζεν αὐ καὶ θείας ἐκμανθάνειν λειτουργίας ἵνα μὴ τῇ κατακρίσει τῶν Θεῶν κανόνων ἀποβληθεῖν †, *every one would have endeavoured to learn the Divine Liturgies, that he might not be subject to the condemnation*

* Id. Novel. 137. Præf.

† Id. Nov. ibid. c. 1.

of the Divine Canons. Here we have a proof not only that there were formed Liturgies before Justinian's reign, for otherwise how could he expect the Clergy should learn them? But also, that these Liturgies had been long before established by the canons of the Church. Among other things too, he requires that for the time to come, such as were ordained should ἀπαγγέλλειν τὴν θείαν προκομιδὴν τῇ ἐπὶ τῇ ἁγίᾳ κοινωνίᾳ γινομένην καὶ τῇ ἐπὶ ἁγίῳ βαπτισματι ἀχὴν καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς προσευχὰς *, *Recite the office for the holy communion, and the prayer for holy baptism, and the rest of the prayers.* These prayers were not made in Justinian's time, but long before it, being established as he hath formerly told us, long before the Ecclesiastical Canons. And after this he enjoins all Bishops and Presbyters, μὴ κατὰ σιωπημένον ἀλλὰ μετὰ φωνῆς τῷ πιστῷ λαῷ ἑταίρῳ τῇ θείᾳ προκομιδῇ καὶ τῇ ἐπὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ βαπτισματι προσάχην ποιῆσθαι †, *That they should not say their prayers silently, but so as that the people might hear them, that so their minds might be exalted to an higher pitch of devotion.*

* Id. Novel. ibid. c. 1.

† Id. ibid. Ut supra. c. 6.

Thus

Thus for near six hundred years after CHRIST, we have sufficient testimony of the public use of liturgies, or forms of prayer; and from that period, or a little after, down to Mr. Calvin's time, the learned men of every kingdom in Christendom, are agreed that no other prayers were admitted into the public worship, but what were contained in the established Liturgies of the respective Churches. And even that great light of the reformation, Mr. Calvin, though he used to pray extempore after his lecture, yet always used a *form* before it*, and as he used a *form* himself, so he composed one for the Sunday service, which was afterwards established by public order at Geneva, with a Liturgy for holy days. And,

In his letter to the Lord Protector of England, in the reign of Edward VI. he thus declares his sentiments concerning public forms, "As to a form of public prayers and "ecclesiastical rites, I do very much approve "of the publishing a fixed one, from which

* Præf. ad Prelect. Calv. in Minor. Proph.—Et Beza.

" it may not be lawful, even for the ministers
 " to depart, in the exercise of their function :
 " thereby to provide against the simplicity
 " and unskilfulness of some, and that the con-
 " sent of all the Churches with each other
 " may more certainly appear; and lastly to
 " to put a bar to the versatile levity of others
 " who effect certain innovations; and therefore,
 " adds he, *statum esse catechismum oportet, statam*
 " *sacramentorum administrationem, publicam item*
 " *precum formulam*: There ought to be an
 " established catechism, an order for the ad-
 " ministration of the sacraments established,
 " and also a public form of prayers *."

In short, there is not any one reformed
 Church, whether Lutheran or Calvinistic,
 but what hath some public office, or *form* of
 prayer, especially in the administration of
 the sacraments: so that our English Dissent-
 ers and their transatlantic brethren, who dis-
 approve the use of public *forms*, have the
 honour to stand singular, and distinguished
 from all the Churches of the world.

Having proved this to you in the above
 account of the antiquity and universality of

* Calvin. Ep. 87.

Liturgies, I shall in my next letter lay before you, to conclude this subject, the opinions of our present Dissenters, Non-conformist Fathers, on forms of prayer, on public forms, on forms prescribed, and of our Liturgy in particular,

LET-

LETTER VII.

THE use of *forms* is declared by the old Non-conformists to be a thing lawful in itself, and what God hath left us at liberty to use, or not to use, as we see occasion. "The word of God," says one *, "doth not prescribe any particular form stinted or not stinted as necessary, but doth warrant both as allowable: for where nothing is in particular commanded touching the external form of words and order, in which our petitions should be presented to the LORD, there we are left at liberty. And to put religion in reading or uttering words, either in a stinted or conceived form, what is it less than superstition?"

Of the same sentiments were the learned

* Vid. Mr. Ball. Trial, c. 2. p. 36, and c. 8. p. 131.

Mr.

Mr. Baxter *, and other eminent Dissenting ministers †.

But they do not only assert, but they also undertake to prove the lawfulness of *forms* ‡, from the nature, use, and ends of prayer, and stigmatize the contrary opinion with the epithets of enthusiasm § and novelty ||.

As to forms of prayer in public, they declare, that it is lawful to use them, and that *this was the tenet of all our best and most judicious divines ¶*. This Dr. Owen is very cautious of denying; he says, *supposing that those who make use of, and plead for forms of prayer, especially in public, do in a due manner prepare themselves for it by holy meditation, &c. I do not judge that there is any such evil in them as that GOD will not communicate his spirit to any in the use of them ***.

* Sacril. Defect. p. 98, 99. Cure of Church Divis. p. 175.

† Tombs's Theodulia, p. 137. Dr. Owen's Discourse of the Work of the Spirit in Prayer, p. 220. 235. V. Dissent. Brethren in 32 Quest. p. 55.

‡ Mr. Ball's Trial, c. 2. Rogers's Trial, 223. Dr. Bryan's Dwelling with God, p. 307.

§ Grave Confut. Ep. to the Reader, Continuation of Morning Exerc. p. 1006.

|| Preston's Sermon, Jo. i. 16.

¶ Clarke's Lives of Ten Divines, p. 255. Ball's Trial, p. 11.

** Dr. Owen's Discourse of Prayer, p. 231.

They

They not only grant that it is lawful to use them, but also that it is expedient.

Mr. Egerton says, "As for the public congregation, special care must be taken that nothing be done in praying, preaching, or administering the sacraments, but what is decent and orderly, because there are many eyes do see us, and many ears hear us: and upon this account, it is expedient for the most part to keep a constant *form* of matter and words *."

Mr. Bradshaw pleads for it, as Mr. Gataker informs us in his life, "for avoiding hesitation, which in prayer is more offensive than in other discourse †." And when in a certain collection of sermons ‡, we find it greatly complained of, that "in our days some have such schismatical phrases, notions, and doctrines in preaching, praying and praising, that a sober Christian cannot say, Amen;" it renders a *form* so much the more necessary and expedient.

They acknowledge that *public forms* were universally used.

* Practice of Christianity, c. 11. p. 691. Edit. 3.

† Life of Mr. Bradshaw in Clarke's Collection, in fol. p. 67.

‡ Continuat. of Morn. Exer. Sermon. xxxi. p. 1006.

Mr.

Mr. Clarke, in his life of Mr. Capel, insists on it that "*set forms* of prayer are according to the practice of all Churches, even the best reformed; yea, and Mr. Smith himself, who became a separatist says, on the LORD's Prayer," that "it was the practice of the Primitive Church, and of all the Reformed Churches in Christendom, of the Churches after the Apostles, nay, (saith he) of the Church, in the time of the Apostles, as may be probably gathered out of 1 Cor. xiv. 26. This hath also been the practice of the best lights that ever were set up in the Churches of CHRIST *."

Accordingly this was the practice of all our old Dissenting ministers.

The same Mr. Clarke tells us, that "it is very well known that the flower of our own divines went on in this way, when they might have done otherwise if they had pleased in their prayers before sermons†." This we are told of Mr. Bradshaw and Mr. Cartwright‡. And we find Mr. Hildersham's prayer, before sermon printed §, and others.

* Collection of the Lives of Ten Divines, p. 255.

† Clarke's Lives, Ut. Sup.

‡ Bradshaw's Life, published by Mr. Clarke, in fol. p. 67.

§ His Doctrine of Fasting and Prayer, anno 1933.

So regular and universal was this mode of prayer, that Mr. Clarke says, "The first man who brought conceived prayer into use in those parts where he lived, was Mr. Samuel Crook," who died but in the year 1649*.

As to prescribed *forms* and Liturgies, of this Mr. Ball says, "I have shewed the use of a stinted Liturgy lawful and allowable by the *word of GOD*, of ancient use in the Churches of CHRIST, and approved by all Reformed Churches †."

1. They allow they are lawful.

"It is contrary to no precept or commandment directly, or by lawful consequence ‡."

Dr. Owen allows "That men or Churches may agree upon a prescribed *form* by common consent, as judging or avowing it best for their own edification," and only argues against prescribing such forms of prayer "universally, and unto the exclusion of free prayer §," which our Church never did ||.

2. They grant that such *forms* are not only lawful, but that there are footsteps of

* His Lives, Ut. Sup.

† Ball's Trial, Epist. to the Reader.

‡ Ibid. c. 1. p. 5. c. 3. p. 23.

§ Discourse of Prayer, p. 222. 235.

|| Vid. 55 Can. of the Church of England.

this way of worship both in the Old and New Testament, as Mr. Tombs and others have shewed; and Mr. Ainsworth himself (who did otherwise argue against them) doth confess *.

3. They acknowledge their antiquity.
 “ The Christian Churches, for the space of 1400 years at least, if not from the Apostles times, have had their stinted Liturgies, says Mr. Ball †. And they answer objections to the contrary ‡.”

4. They grant that in the best Reformed, nay, in all Reformed Churches, Liturgies are not only used and tolerated, but also useful, expedient, and necessary.

5. That those among us to whom the use of the common prayer hath been thought most burthensome, “ have from time to time professed their liking and approbation of a stinted Liturgy.” Of all these things Mr. Ball, for himself and others, assures us.

6. That they thought it altogether unlawful to separate, from an “ established true

* Tombs's Theodulia, p. 221. Baxter's Cure, p. 176. Ball's Trial, p. 108. 129. Ainsworth's Annot. on Ex. p. 12. 8.

† Ball's Trial, p. 96, 106, 111, 138, and 80.

‡ Tombs's Theodulia, p. 222. Ball, Roger's Treatises, &c.

Protestant Church," for the sake of stinted *forms* and Liturgies.

So say Mr. Ball *, Mr. Norton of New England †, and thus Mr. Baxter ‡, &c. §.

"Is it not," saith Mr. Baxter, "a high degree of pride to conclude, that almost all CHRIST'S Churches in the world for these 1300 years at least, to this day, have offered such worship unto GOD, as that you are obliged to avoid it; and that almost all the Catholic Church on earth, this day, is below your communion, for using *forms*: And that even Calvin, and the Presbyterians, Hilderham, Cartwright, &c. with the old Non-conformists, were unworthy your communion?"

We know all the objections which were ever offered against forms of prayer; but we know too that every one of them were unanswerably replied to by them. But since the most common one is that of quenching and stinting the spirit, I shall very shortly give their sense of it. They say

* Ball's Trial, p. 121, 129, 140, 156.

† Answer to Apollonius, c. 13.

‡ Sacril. Desert. p. 102. Defence, Part 2. p. 65.

§ Rogers 7 Tr: p. 224. Ball, &c.

1. To tell us that persons should use no set *form*, but pray as moved by the Spirit, "is a fond error*."

2. They say, "That the Spirit instructeth us what to ask, not in what phrase of speech. It stirreth up in us holy desires, but giveth not ability suddenly and without help, to express and lay open our hearts in fit method and significant words. Ability of speech is a common gift of the Spirit, which the LORD bestoweth upon the bad, as well as on the good, &c.†"

3. That "The measure of the Spirit standeth not in words and forms, but in fervent sighs and groans‡."

4. That, "There is nothing letteth but that in such *forms*, the hearers hearts may profitably go with the same both to humble, to quicken, and to comfort§." And Dr. Owen says "That such forms as our Liturgy may be for edification, and that persons in using them may *have communion with God* ||."

* Rogers's 7 Tr.—Tr. 3. c. 4. p. 223.

† Ball's Trial, c. 5. p. 83.

‡ Ibid.

§ Rogers, *ibid.*

|| Discourse of Prayer, p. 222, 231, 232.

5. They allow that, "the Scriptures insisted upon, in this case, are grounded on mistakes, and are misapplied." This Mr. Tombs, in particular, hath clearly proved *.

4thly. We shall now consider what those old Dissenting ministers opinions are of our English Liturgy, or common prayer, both as to the Liturgy itself, and communion in it.

As to the Liturgy itself, it is acknowledged,

1. That the matter, is for the most part, very good, sound and divine, and that "There is not any doctrinal passage in any of the prayers, that may not bear a good construction, and so Amen may be said to it." This Dr. Bryan and others maintain †.

2. That as no Church for this 1400 years has been without its public *forms*, so ours is the best. "Compare," say they, "the doctrines, prayers, rites, which are used in other Churches, with ours, and in all these (blessed be the name of the LORD) we are more pure than they ‡. Mr. Baxter says the same §.

* Theodulla, p. 164. 238.

† Bryan's Dwelling with God, Sermon VI. p. 312.—Baxter's Defence, Part I. p. 29. 39.—Crofton's Reformation no Separation. p. 25.

‡ T. D. Jerubbaal.—Letter of the Ministers in Old England. p. 12.

§ Second Plea for Peace, p. 107.

3. That

3. That which is accounted most faulty they own to be tolerable, and hinders not its being *acceptable to GOD*, and edifying to pious and well-disposed persons.

Mr. Corbet says, "The worship contained in the Church Liturgy may lawfully be partaken in, it being sound for substance in the main, and the mode thereof being laudable, in divers forms and orders, and passable in the most, though in some inconvenient perhaps, and less perfect *."

The ministers of Old England tell us that "in them that join with the Church prayers, according to CHRIST's command, (and liberty of absence from CHRIST hath not been shewed) notwithstanding the corruptions, we hold the prayers to be *an holy and acceptable sacrifice to GOD*, &c.†"

Mr. Hilderham, Mr. Rogers ‡ &c. allow, "That the prayers of our Liturgy are very edifying to pious hearers;" and

Mr. Corbet says, from his own experience§, "Though I judge the Church's *forms*

* Plea for Lay-communion, p 2. Vid. Ball's Trial, c. 9. p. 1

† Letter of the Old Eng. ministers, p. 13.

‡ Treat. 3. c. 4. p. 254.

§ Plea, p. 1.

of worship to be less perfect than is desired, yet I have found my heart spiritually affected and raised towards GOD therein, and more especially in receiving at Church *the* LORD's *supper*. I judge this *form* may be used formally by the formal, and spiritually by the spiritual. It is my part to make the best of it, being the established *form*."

As to Communion in the Liturgy, they allow,

1. That there is no cause to renounce it, or the communion of the Church, for it* and that to do so is a sin †.

2. That "all the Reformed Churches in Christendom, do commonly profess to hold communion with the English Churches in their Liturgy, if they come among us, where it is used ‡."

3. The old Dissenters declared "that they ordinarily and constantly used the Communion-book, in their public ministrations §. And their successors in 1683, tell us that

* Corbet's Plea, p. 3.

† Gifford's Plain Declaration.—Ball's Trial, &c.

‡ Mr. Baxter's Def. of Cure, p. 68.

§ Ball's Trial, p. 121, c. 8. p. 155.

" they

“ they could lawfully not only hear common prayers in Church, but read it themselves *.”

* Mr. Read's Case, p. 7. — Humphrey. — Baxter. — Fairclough, &c.

LETTER VIII.

I SHALL not exhaust your patience with a detail of the hacknied objections which our several sectarians have published against our Liturgy, and which the answers of our divines have clearly confuted and silenced, a century ago*, but as, at present, as well as then, some Dissenting ministers and writers of their party†, whose popularity, among the low and ignorant people in their walk, may gain them credit to any thing they say, have basely asserted that the Liturgy of our Church is full of Popery; I think it proper, before I conclude, to give you the answer to this charge, which was given by the old Dissenters, and by some of our learned clergy, a

* Vid. Bishop Beverege's Sermon "On the Excellency and Usefulness of the Common Prayer." Archbishop Tenison; Dr. Claget; Dr. Cave, &c.

† A book called the Confessional; Dr. Price, &c.

hundred years before Dr. Price, or the author of the Confessional, &c. was born.

“ If,” says the old Dissenters, “ the Liturgy of the Church of England be Popish, Antichristian, or like the Mass-book, it must be so either in respect of the matter, or the *form*. Not of the matter, for all that which properly belonged to Antichrist, the foul and gross errors is quite purged out. Not of the *form*, for order and phrase of speech is not properly Antichristian, or Popish*.”

2. They insist †, “ that the English Liturgy is gathered according to the ancients, the purest of them, and is by no means a collection out of the Mass-book, but a refining of that Liturgy which Rome had stained with her Mass, &c. And that it is not at all a translation of that Mass, but a restitution of the primitive Liturgy.”

This was the unanimous opinion of their most eminent and judicious divines. And their learned Mr. Tombs was so zealous on this point, that he warmly says, “ I cannot but judge that either much ignorance or much

* Ball's Trial, c. 8. p. 152, 155.

† V. Letter of the Minist. of Old Engl. p. 14. Dr. Bryan's Dwelling with God, p. 309, 310. Mr. Baxter's Cure, p. 281.

malice it is, that makes any person traduce the English Common Prayer Book, as if it were the Popish Mass-book, or as bad as it; and to deter men from joining with those prayers and services in it, as if it were joining with Antichrist, the Pope, (when they can hardly be ignorant that the Martyrs in Queen Mary's days were burnt for it) is impudent falsehood*."

So much for the judgment of the old Dissenters on this objection to our Liturgy. Let us now attend to what some of the Church divines say in reply to it.

Dr. Claget says, This objection, that our prayers, &c. are to be found in the Mass-book, and the Breviary, and the offices of the Church of Rome, hath made a great noise; but I appeal to men of understanding if there be any sense in it.

No man will say, that it is enough to make any prayer or *form* of devotion or instruction unlawful to be used, that the same is to be found in the Mass-book, &c. For then the LORD's Prayer, the Psalms, a great part of the Scriptures, and the Creeds, must never

* Theodulia, p. 102.

be used by us; and therefore whether any part of the Roman service is to be used by us or not, must be judged by some other rule, that is, by the Word of God. So that it is a vain and nugatory exception against any part of our Liturgy, to say it was taken out of the Mass-book, unless it could be also shewn that it is some part of the Romish superstition.

I know it has been said, that the Scriptures being of necessary use, are to be retained by us, though the Church of Rome retains them, but that there is not the same reason for *forms* which are not necessary; but in those we ought to go as far from that Church as ever we can.

But what reason, in the name of common sense is there for this? For the danger that may happen to us in coming too near them, lies in things wherein they do ill, not in which they do well. And as for the Papists themselves, we do not in the least countenance them wherein they are wrong, by agreeing with them wherein they are right. And as for the things themselves, they are not the worse for being used by them. Even Calvin says, "Let not any person think me so austere,

OF

or bound up as to forbid a Christian, without any exception to accommodate himself to the Papists in any ceremony or observance; for it is not my purpose to condemn any thing, but what is clearly evil or openly vitious*.”

We should allow the Papists a greater power to do mischief than they have, if their using of some good things should render all use of them hurtful to us.

The case, in short, is this:—When our Reformers were intent upon the reformation of the Liturgy, they designed to purge it of all those corrupt additions, which the usurped authority of the Church of Rome had long since brought into it; and to retain nothing but what was agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and to the practice of the purer ages of the Church. And in this they acted like wise men, because thus it would be evident to the world that they reformed upon just and necessary reasons, and not merely out of a desire of change and innovation; since they purified the *forms* of Divine Service from nothing but innovations and corruptions, and an unprofitable crowd of ceremonies.

* Calvin. de vitandâ Superstitione, &c.

No man can shew us a good reason why those passages in the Common Prayer Book, which are to be found in the Mass Book, but which were used also by the Church before Romanism had corrupted it, are not as much to be valued, because they were once used by the primitive Christians, as they are to be run down because they have been since used by superstitious and idolatrous men. But

To conclude this matter, if any man would sit down with a design to expose the Mass Book, he would, I suppose, lay hold upon nothing but the corruptions that are in it, and things that are obnoxious to just reproof, not on things that are justifiable and may easily be defended. And the reason of this is plain, because the Mass Book is to blame for those parts of it only, but not at all for these. Why then, our Dissenters must allow, that for such passages as the Mass Book itself is not worthy of blame, neither is our Liturgy to be blamed, if they would speak without prejudice and passion.

Another of our divines argues thus, in vindicating our Liturgy from the imputation of Popery.

For

For our Liturgy of some ancient prayers, is it Popish as a *set form*? Or as a *form* of those prayers? A *set form* is so expedient and necessary to the Church, if but for the sake of the people (that they may be sure to have no other petitions suggested than what are fit, that their devotion may not suffer by the weakness or indiscretion of the minister, that they may know beforehand how to prepare their thoughts, and what frame of soul is to be brought to Church), that I may take leave to say, had a *set form* been used, not only in the superstitions of Rome, but in the charms of Magician, it ought, however, to be used in the service of God. If the Papists, if even the Heathens used *set forms*, because it was the most certain, orderly, and best considered way, most fit and proper for the worship of a God, must we, therefore be forbid? Because they did well, are we, therefore to do worse?

And so for the prayers themselves, they are most of them older than Popery, and none of them more Popish than the LORD's Prayer. And if there are any of their compositions, yet if they are good, and according to the will of God, why may they not be offered to him by us, as well as by them? Nay, may they
not

not be more acceptable to God, as they may be a testimony how willing we would be to keep the unity of his Church, and to join with all Christians, were we permitted in all their devotions? If our accusers would shew us any Popery in our prayers, they ought to shew us where we pray to any but God, or for any thing for which we have not his warrant; where we use any intercession but our SAVIOUR's, or what part of our English language is an unknown tongue.

Bishop Stillingfleet, to whose learning and veracity no Dissenter of literary character can reasonably object, hath assured us that "the Church of England hath omitted none of those offices wherein all the ancient Churches were agreed. And where the primitive British or Gallican Church differed from the Roman, our present Church hath not followed the Roman but the Gallican, and British; and therefore our Dissenters do very unreasonably charge us with taking our offices from the Church of Rome*." Bishop Jewell speaking on the same subject says, "*Nos vero nihil temere, nihil nisi summa cum ratione fecimus,*

* Vid. Stillingf. Origin. Britannic. c. 4. p. 237. and from p. 216 to p. 237, he proves this.

nihil

*nihil nisi quod videbamus et semper licuisse fieri, et a Sanctis Patribus, sæpe, sine ulla reprehensione, fuisse factum. Itaque, convocatis Episcopis frequenti Synodo, communi consensu omnium ordinum, ecclesiæ sordes, quas vel incuria hominum vel malitia infuderat, tanquam Augæ stabulum, repurgavimus; et quantum assequi maximè potuimus, omnia ad pristinum nitorem, ad apostolicorum temporum et Primitivæ Ecclesiæ similitudinem revocavimus. Idque et potuimus recte facere, et quia potuimus, fidenter fecimus *."*

As a kind of translation to what I have cited from this venerable Bishop, and as an additional authority in favour of what I write for, if any more authorities were necessary, allow me to conclude with what Mr. Downes says, in his lives of the compilers of our Liturgy. "They not only examined the Popish forms, but likewise all other service books then in use. These they compared with the primitive Liturgies, and whatever they found in them consonant to the Holy Scriptures, and the doctrine and worship of the primitive Church, they retained and improved; but the modern corruptions and superstitious innova-

* Epist. Juelli Episcop. De Concil. Trident.

tions of later ages they entirely discharged and rejected *."

I hope, by this time, I have satisfied you on the two points I promised to prove. 1. The antiquity of Liturgies, and 2. That our Church Liturgy is a truly primitive and scriptural one, formed on the model of the apostolic times, and the purest ages of the Christian Church, before the world ever heard of Popery, or Protestant Dissenters.

In my next, I shall prove the antiquity and propriety of "kneeling at the Sacrament of the Supper." And vindicate it from the Popery which our Dissenters have of late been basely taught to accuse it of. In the mean time, believe me, Your's, &c.

* Downe's Lives, &c. p. 150.

LETTER IX.

My dear Sir,

I AM now to prove to you, that "Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament of the LORD's Supper, as commanded by the Church of England, is agreeable to the practice of the first and purest ages of the Christian Church," long before the world had ever heard of a Pope or a Papist, and therefore, there cannot be any thing of Popery in it.

The only way for proving this is diligently to consult the records of ancient times, and from them to make a faithful report of the customs and usages of the old primitive Church of CHRIST. When once these are known, it will be very easy, by comparing things together, to discern whether they are consistent, or contrary one to another? Whether the practice of the Church of England,

as

as to kneeling at the Sacrament, be agreeable or repugnant to that of the first Christians?

In answer, therefore, to this question, my business is to give a plain historical account of the practice of the Church in those early ages of Christianity. In my doing this it will evidently appear, that the Church of England, by obliging her communicants to kneel, doth not oblige them to practice any thing but what is agreeable to the customs and practice of pure antiquity.

But before I enter upon what I have engaged to perform, I beg leave to premise a few things concerning this question in general, and to explain what we are to understand by the term contained in it, "the first and purest ages."

As to the case itself in general, it is of such a nature, and requires such an answer, that not one in a parish, of the ordinary and common sort of people, is properly qualified to understand it, so as to pass a true judgment on it; whether we are in the right or wrong they know not, the merits of the cause are quite out of their reach. They believe as they are taught, and upon the credit of others who, they suppose, are able to inform them

about such matters. For in order to estimate the present case aright, and as it ought, it is necessary that a man have some competent knowledge of the customs and constitutions of the ancient Church; the decrees of councils, the works of the Fathers, and the original languages wherein they wrote. This few or none of the vulgar have attained to.

And indeed, for the sake of this very consideration, I should have passed this query by, without examining it in the way I do, had I not in my interviews with several Lay Dissenters heard it mentioned, and the Popery of it pleaded in justification of their non-conformity to the custom and constitution of our established Church.

I cannot help being astonished to find men make that a rule of conscience, and boldly rely and practice upon it, which they do not at all understand. It is still more astonishing to find this weapon put into the hands of ordinary and illiterate people, not only to defend themselves against the laws of their lawful superiors, and those who are set over them by God to be their rulers and guides, in all such cases, especially, where they are incapable of ruling or directing themselves, but also

also to wound and murder the reputation of the national Church, as degenerate from all antiquity, as introducing and imposing novel customs and ceremonies repugnant to the principles and practices of the first and purest ages, and imported from Rome.

Whether it be an honest or Christian action of our Dissenting ministers to furnish the common people, who are their auditors, with such kind of arguments as these, so much out of their way, and above their capacity and understanding, I submit to the candid part of the world.

The next thing I would premise is this: suppose, for a moment, that kneeling at the Sacrament was never used by the ancient Church, yet such an objection is a wretched plea in the mouth of a Dissenter to justify his non-conformity by, as to this particular gesture.

For if kneeling be a crime and unlawful, because it was not used in primitive times: sitting at the Sacrament is a much greater: for that was condemned as an irreverend posture, as will appear by and by. Besides, the Dissenters have a very little value for anti-

quity, and in all things almost run quite counter to it.

One would therefore think they should be very willing to receive kneeling, for that very reason which they produce against it, that is, because, according to them, it is contrary to the current practice of all antiquity, as they teach one another to believe. This, I say, might be expected from them, because they will not be persuaded by any means or intreaties to comply with such customs and ceremonies of our Church, as were undoubtedly used by the primitive Christians. Such as god-fathers and god-mothers, the cross in baptism, the feasts or holy days of Christmas, Easter, &c. Instead of conformity to these things, they raise a hue and cry upon the Church, as Popish and Antichristian, for enjoining such ceremonies, and pretend they had much rather endure any extremity, than submit their necks to such an intolerable yoke.

But what can government do to please such capricious, humourful persons! When our governors tread in the very steps of the primitive Bishops, and blessed Martyrs of antiquity, then they are Popish and Antichristian,
and

and the consciences of our Dissenting brethren will not suffer them to conform; at other times they cannot conform, because they require them to do what was never required nor practised in the Church of CHRIST, till transubstantiation was established in the world. So that to follow antiquity is their objection against conformity, to-day; and not to follow it is as great a one with them, to-morrow: whenever they please to make it so, it is so, and must be so, say or do all we possibly can to the contrary.

So fullenly addicted still
To their only principle, their will,
That whatsoe'er it chance to prove
No force of argument can move.
For though their topics, frail and weak,
Could ne'er amount above a freak,
They still maintain them, like their faults,
Against the desp'ratest assaults;
And back their feeble want of sense,
With greater heat and confidence. HUD.

Thus much concerning the case in general; let us now inquire into the meaning of that phrase, the "first and purest ages."

This I think may be easily made out from the writings of those men who have obstinately

defended sitting, or a common table gesture, and who have delivered their sentiments with as much clearness and as roundly as one would wish concerning this point. For thus, says one of them, who pleads warmly for sitting, "Antiquity is wholly against us, and the primitive Churches never so much as heard of kneeling: and the Churches succeeding excluded it out of their congregations, and gave it no entertainment for the space of 1200 years. That kneeling to receive the Sacrament, was not used at the institution of the LORD's Supper, nor after in any age of the Church, before the time of Honorius the Third, about the year 1220*."

Another great champion for sitting writes, "Didoclavius maintaineth that which none of our opposites are able to infringe, viz, That no testimony can be produced which may evince that ever kneeling was used before the time of Honorius the Third." He observes too, from the history of the Waldenses, "That bowing of the knees before the Host was then only enjoined, when the opinion of transubstantiation got place†."

* Dispute upon Kneel, &c. To the Reader.

† Gillesp. Disp. against Eng. Pop. Cerem. p. 191. Altar. Damasce. 784. and ibid. Lib. I. c. 1,

By

By the practice of the Church in the first and purest ages, I conceive they mean this much: "That from the age wherein the holy Apostles lived, down to that wherein transubstantiation was set on foot, or that wherein Honorius the Third enjoined the adoration of the Host, kneeling in the act of receiving the LORD's Supper, was never heard of nor used; or, as one author expressly asserts it, till the year 1220."

Now, in order to make sure of the matter under our consideration, and to clear it up to your satisfaction, I think it will be necessary to fix the time when transubstantiation was first broached, as well as when it was established, and imposed as an article of faith, as also when the adoration of the host was enjoined. By doing this the exact limits will be known, beyond which we are not to pass, to fetch in evidence; and consequently all extravagancy will be prevented on our part, and all cavilling, if possible, on theirs.

As for the time then, which we enquire after, I think we may very safely rely on the judgment of a very learned prelate of our own*.

* Histori. Transub. Papal. Johan. Epist. Dunelm. Edit. 1675.
P. 53, 54.

He tells us, the word of transubstantiation is so far from being found in the Sacred Scriptures, or the writings of the ancient fathers, that the great patrons of it do themselves acknowledge, it was not so much as heard of before the twelfth century. Nay, that the thing itself, without the word, the doctrine without the expression, cannot be proved from Scripture, is ingenuously acknowledged by the most learned schoolmen *, who endeavoured by other arguments to defend it, and allow it to be brought in by the authority of the Pope, and not received in the Church of Rome till 1200 years after CHRIST. The first authors who mention this new-coined word, transubstantiation, are Petrus Blesensis, who lived under Pope Alexander III. about the year 1159, and Stephanus Eduensis, a Bishop, whose age and writings are very doubtful.

The Pope, who first established this absurd doctrine by his own arbitrary power, as an article of faith, was Innocent III †. And his successor, Honorius, was the man who decreed adoration to the Host ‡.

* Scotus, Durandus, Biel, Cameracen, Cajetan, &c.

† An. Domin. 1215.

‡ An. Domin. 1217, or thereabout.

The first council who took notice of and approved this Papal decree, was that assembled at Constance*, which condemned our Wickliff for an heretic, because among other truths, he had asserted, " That the substance of the bread and wine remains materially in the Sacrament of the altar; and that in the same Sacrament no accidents of bread and wine remain without a substance." For this opinion they ordered his body to be taken out of his grave, and burnt to ashes.

Thus matters stood till the year 1551, when the council of Trent published it to the world for an infallible truth, and imposed the belief of it upon all, under the pain of an Anathema.

As for the doctrine of consubstantiation, and the corporal presence of CHRIST at, with, and in, the Sacrament, it was started long before that of transubstantiation, and was much disputed in the learned world. He who first thought of it in the East, was John Damascen, in the days of Gregory III. about the year 740. About 100 years afterwards it was revived in the West, by the means of Paschasius Radbertus, a Monk of Corbie, and

* An. Dom. 1415.

one Amalarius a Deacon of Metz *. The former taught that CHRIST was consubstantiated, or rather inclosed in the bread, and corporally united to it in the Sacrament; for as yet there was no idea of such a thing as the transubstantiation of bread. The latter gives it as his belief *that the simple nature of the bread and wine mixed is turned into a reasonable nature* †, viz. of the body and blood of CHRIST. In another place he confesseth, that it was past his comprehension to determine what became of this body after it was eaten ‡. “ When the body of CHRIST is taken with a good intention, it is not for me, says he, to dispute whether it be invisibly taken up into heaven, or kept in our body till the day of our burial, or exhaled into the air, or whether it go out of the body with the blood, or be sent out by the mouth, &c. ‡. For this and other foolish speculation about the three parts or kinds of CHRIST’s body, he was censured by a Synod

* He wrote De Ecclesiis. Officiis De Ord. Antiphon. &c. and was cotemporary with Amalarius Fortunatus Archbishop of Triers, who wrote De Sac. Baptis. ad Carol. M.

† Amalar. De Eccles. Officiis, Lib. III. c. 24. and Lib. III. c. 35.

‡‡ Amalar. Epist. ad Guitardum, MS. in Biblioth. Coll. S. Benedictie. Cantabrigiæ. Cod. 55. cited by Archbishop Usher, Ans. Jesuits Chall. p. 75.

held at Cressy, wherein it was declared by the Bishops of France, "That the bread and wine are spiritually made the body of CHRIST; which being a meat of the mind, and not of the belly, is not corrupted, but remaineth unto everlasting life." From this we may see, and also from the writings of several learned men of that age*, who opposed the dotages of the corporal presence, that the Western Church had not then adulterated the doctrine of the Sacrament, but followed the pure and sound sense of the ancient fathers, and condemned these whims and stupid conceits of the carnal or oral eating of CHRIST in the sacrament. Nay, in the year 1079, when Hildebrand, called Gregory VII. came to the Papal chair, the Bishops and Doctors were divided in their opinions concerning the corporal presence. Some maintained Berengarius's opinion, who denied it; some followed that of Paschasius, as appears from the acts of that council, writ by those of the Pope's faction, and called on purpose to condemn Berengarius. And even Hildebrand himself, it is said, doubted whether what we receive at

* Rabanus Maurus, John Erigena Wala. Strabo, Ratramus or Bertramus.

the LORD's table, be indeed the body of CHRIST by a substantial conversion. Three months was granted to Berengarius to consider in, and a fast appointed to the Cardinals, that some sign from heaven might be given by GOD to shew who was in the right, the Pope or Berengarius*. It seems the doctrine of the Pope's infallibility was not known in that age; and that of the corporal presence much doubted. But however thus much we may conclude upon, that from the dark and mysterious writings of Paschasius and Amalarius, without any sign from heaven, did that monstrous error of transubstantiation take its rise, which came after this period to be established as an article of faith in the Church of Rome.

As to the time then in which we are to confine this discussion, it shall be the first 700 years after CHRIST. And I shall appeal for evidence, in the subject under dispute to none but authors who lived within that series of years. And I hope the Dissenters will allow that they lived in the first and purest ages, because they were dead before the doctrines either of consubstantiation or transubstantiation

* Benno. Card. in Vita Hild.—Epif. Dunelm. Hist. Tran. p. 135.

were ever thought of, much less received and established in the world.

If I would take all the advantage that the advocates for sitting give me, I need not confine myself within so narrow a compass. For they challenge our Church to produce one instance for kneeling before the days of Honorius the Third, who lived 1220, or very near that year; and they confidently assert, kneeling was never heard of, nor used, for 1200 years after CHRIST. I hope therefore they will not complain I use them unfairly, or strain the point, since I give them away 500 years, wherein the pure ancient Catholic faith, with respect to the sacrament in question, began to decline, and was by various arts, at last, grossly corrupted. This piece of liberality I need not have dispensed to them, but my design is to convince, not to contend. Let us therefore bring this matter under examination, and see what the practice was for 700 years after CHRIST, or which is all one in the first and purest ages. I say, and shall endeavour to prove, 1. That it is more than probable the primitive Christians did always kneel in the act of receiving, as communicants

cants in the Church of England do. 2. That it is certain they used an adoring posture.

1. For the first century or 100 years in which our SAVIOUR and the Apostles lived, the Scriptures have left us in the dark, and under great uncertainty what the particular gesture was which they used at the institution and celebration of the Holy Sacrament of the Supper. CHRIST instituted this holy feast at the close of the Paschal feast, and administered it to his Disciples, but whether sitting, kneeling, or standing, is no where mentioned, nor plainly determined; the Babylon and Jerusalem Talmud, Maimonides, and Buxtorf, assure us that the Jews, at the beginning of the Paschal feast, placed themselves in a leaning or discumbing posture, and continued it while they eat and drank the two first cups of wine; (for every guest was obliged at this feast, to drink four cups) but, at the third cup, called in their language, The Cup of Blessing, and the fourth, called The Song or Psalm Cup when they sung the hymn, there was no necessity of lying along*, but on the contrary, if we believe the Jewish doctors, of standing up as slaves, to remind them of their Egyptian

* The Talmudists and Maimonides, &c. testify this.

bondage.

bondage*. It is likely when our LORD took the third cup, he took an opportunity to change the use and signification of it, and to institute the Eucharistic cup called in allusion to this, very probably by St. Paul, The Cup of Blessing. Besides, though the Jews in their solemn feasts used discumbing, yet in giving thanks and in blessing, before those feasts, Philo tells us they were always in a standing gesture, with their eyes and their hands lifted up to heaven; and, therefore it is highly improbable that CHRIST and his Apostles, would continue in their table gesture, at the blessing of the holy supper, which is an higher ordinance than the Passover. Because to have done so would have been very unsuitable to so great and so holy a solemnity, especially too, if as the learned Dr. Lightfoot thinks, CHRIST changed the third cup at the Passover, called The Cup of Blessing, into the Sacramental Cup. For, if he did, he would certainly change his posture, and according to the Jewish general and established custom, stand in the gesture of adoration. But though I think more and stronger

* Buxtorf, Syn. c. 13. p. 300.

arguments might be brought in defence of the standing gesture than of any other, it is not my business at present to offer them, nor to make any longer digression from the point in hand; as therefore, the particular attitude used by CHRIST at the institution of the supper can never be positively proved, and our Bible is totally silent on this part of the subject, I proceed to enquire what the primitive fathers and councils, &c. have left to aid our conjectures.

It is certain, sitting was considered by the primitive Church as a very irreverend and improper posture, in the worship and service of GOD. Of this take a few instances.

The ancient Laodicean Synod* finding great inconveniencies to arise from the Love Feasts which were kept at the same time with the LORD's Supper, prohibited absolutely the said feasts, and the lying upon couches, as they usually did at those feasts.

The words of the Canon (No. 28,) are these: "The feasts of charity ought not to

* This Synod met under Pope Sylvester, I. between the Neocæsarian Synod, and the first General Council of Nice: that is, between the years 314 and 325, as some learned men tell us. Or Ann. Dom. 365, after the first General Nicene Council, as other writers think.

be kept in the LORD's house, or in the Church, neither may ye eat or make couches in the house of GOD."

This was afterwards forbid too by the council of Carthage; and the decrees of both these provincial or national councils were ratified by the 6th Trullan council (Canon 74) and that under the pain of excommunication. Upon this the custom gradually came to be totally neglected.

The reasons which induced these holy Bishops and ancient Fathers to prohibit these feasts of charity, and the use of a discumbing posture upon beds or couches in Church, which was an ordinary table gesture in that country and age, were in all probability taken from the very great disorder and irreverence, the animosities and excesses that accompanied these feasts, and of which both rich and poor were guilty. They did not make any distinction between their spiritual and corporal food, between the LORD's Supper and a common meal. They did not "Discern the LORD's Body," as St. Paul expresses it; and there is reason to think that the same abuses which had crept in so early into the Church at Corinth, and which St. Paul took notice of

and reprov'd, continued and spread themselves till the Church, by her censures and decrees, oppos'd the growing evil, and rooted up the causes of such scandalous effects.

To these Canons of councils, if we add the testimony of particular Bishops who lived in those first ages, and who speak not their own private sense and opinions, but the customs and usages of the Church in their time, we shall very plainly see that sitting was accounted an irreverend posture in the worship of God, while they were employed in prayer or praise, or receiving the Holy Sacrament.

Justin Martyr, who lived in the second century, about the year of our LORD 155, immediately after the age of the Apostles, seems to hint that the people sat at the sermon, and while the lessons were reading*. When he informs us concerning the Christian assemblies in his time, "After the reading of the lessons, and the exhortatory sermon of the Bishop, we rise up, saith he, altogether, and send up our prayers." He does not indeed inform us what the particular gesture was which they used at their prayers, but it is clear enough they did not sit; and they might kneel

* Apol. 2.

for any thing he says to the contrary. For it is customary you know among us to sit at the sermon; and during the reading of the lessons; and after they are ended, we may be truly said to rise up all together and send up our prayers. But if any person should infer from this that we stood and did not kneel, he would conclude against the law of the land and the practice of the Church. Rising up doth not therefore necessarily imply that a man stands or kneels afterwards, but something previous to both; for we generally rise before we do either.

But however sitting at the sermons and lessons was usual in those assemblies which this holy Father and Martyr frequented, yet in most other places the people were not permitted to sit at all. This appears partly from what Philostorgius, an ancient ecclesiastic historian* observes of Theophilus, an Indian Bishop. He informs us, that among several irregularities which he corrected in those Churches, he particularly reformed this; "That the people were wont to sit when the lessons out of the Gospel were read to them;"

* Hist. Eccles. l. 3. n. 5. p. 29. He lived A. D. 425.

and partly from Sozomen's history, in which it is remarked, as a very new and singular thing in the Bishop of Alexandria, "That he did not rise up when the Gospels were read."

But Optatus*, Bishop of Milevis, affords us a fuller evidence from what he writes against Parmenianus the Donatist. After he had accused him of pride and innovation, and censured him for an uncharitable and traducing spirit, which animated all his sermons and treatises, he cites a passage out of the psalms, and applies it home to him. *Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother, &c*†. In which place God reproves him who sits and defames his brother, and therefore such evil teachers as you, says Optatus, are more particularly pointed at in this text. "*For the people are not permitted to sit in the Church.*"

This text particularly respects Bishops and Presbyters, as the only persons who had a right and privilege to sit in the public and religious assemblies. But it does not at all concern the people who always stood the whole time of divine service‡.

* Eccles. Hist. l. 7. c. 19. p. 734. He lived An. Dom. 440.

† Psal. 49. In our translation, 50, 20. Lib. IV. De Schism. Donat. p. 78. Paris Edit. An. Dom. 365.

‡ Vid. Albasp. Nat. in 4 Lib. Optat.

If it had not been a general and prevailing custom among the Christians of those times, as well heretical as orthodox to stand all the time in Church, and particularly at the lessons and sermons, Parmenianus might have easily retorted this argument upon Optatus as being weak, and concluding nothing against him in particular, but what might have been charged in common upon all private Christians who sat in the Church as well as he.

Another testimony that sitting was esteemed irreverend in the worship of God, we have in a passage or two of Tertullian, who lived *anno domini* 198, in the same century with Justin Martyr. Among other bad customs taken notice of and reproved by this ancient Father, one is, that some of the people were wont "to sit at prayer." In the same chapter*, Tertullian says, "By doing so we are guilty of the great sin of irreverence, which the very heathens, if they understood what we do, would take notice of. For if it be irreverent to sit in the presence of, and to confront one whom you have a high respect and veneration for, how much more irreligious is this gesture in

* Tertullian, de Orat. c. 12. Tom. II. p. 130. Edit. Collon. Agrip. 1617.

the sight of the living God, the angel of prayer yet standing by! unless we think fit to upbraid God that prayer hath wearied us*.”

Add to this the saying of the Emperor Constantine the Great, “That it was very unfit to attend upon any discourse concerning God, with ease and softness, and that it was very consonant to piety and religion, that discourses about divine things should be heard standing†.”

These few instances may convince you that the ancient Church did by no means approve of sitting, or a common table gesture even in their ordinary religious services, except at the reading of the lessons, and hearing of the sermon. This too was only practised in some places; for in others, and the greater part of the Christian Churches, the people were not allowed to sit at all in Church. And at this day, this custom is still observed in most, if not in all of the Eastern Churches, where there are no seats erected or allowed for the use of the people,

And here permit me, before I proceed, to

* Tertull. de Oratione, c. 17.

† Euseb. de Vit. Const. Mag. Lib. IV. p. 400. Coll. Allob.
1612.

make a reflection or two upon what I have wrote you. If the Apostles, when they were commissioned to teach all nations, had in their travels, every where taught and established sitting or discumbing—the common table gestures in the Eastern Churches—not only as convenient, but as necessary to be used in order to receive the LORD's Supper worthily, it is very surprising and unaccountable how there should be such an early and universal revolt of the primitive Church from the doctrine and the constitutions of the Apostles; and then when we consider what a high value and esteem the primitive Christians had for the Apostles, the first founders of their faith, and for all that passed under their names, is it not very improbable, if not morally impossible, that so many Churches, with all their respective Bishops and numerous Pastors dwelling in remote and distant countries, not biassed by faction, not swayed by a superior authority, perfectly free and independent one upon another, should unanimously consent and conspire together to introduce a novel custom into the Church of CHRIST, contrary to apostolic precept or practice, and contrary to order; nay, and not only to do so, but also

to censure the practice and injunctions of divinely-inspired men as indecent and unfit to be followed and observed in the public worship of God; and all this without the least notice of it being taken by any writer, and without any complaint or opposition from any particular person, either in that or any of the following ages? Would it not be absurd to suppose, and much more so to believe, all these glaring inconsistencies?

The Dissenters of learning and we agree, that the primitive Church esteemed the sacrament of the supper to be the most solemn part of Christian worship, and what deservedly challenged from them the utmost fervors of devotion, the highest possible reverence they could pay or express either with their bodies or their souls. They considered admission to it as the greatest honor and happiness, and exclusion from it as the greatest cure and punishment that could be inflicted. Their literati too agree with us that standing, in time of divine service, both at their prayers and at the sacrament, was the posture generally used by the ancient Church in her religious assemblies. There is, therefore, no occasion for a cloud of witnesses from ecclesiastical history

tory to prove this. But, however, I must be more particular on the next point, for your information. You must know,

The primitive Church, though on the LORD's days, and for the space of fifty days between Easter and Whit-Sunday, they observed standing, yet at other times, they used the gesture of kneeling at their public devotions.

This will appear from a decree passed in the first general council of Nice, in words to this purpose: "Because there are some which kneel on the LORD's day, and in the days of Pentecost; that is, between Easter and Whit-Sunday; it is therefore ordained by this holy Synod, that when we pay our vows unto the LORD in prayer, we observe a standing gesture, to the end that an uniform and agreeable custom may be maintained and secured throughout all churches*."

By this Canon, provision was made against kneeling, not as if it were an inconvenient and unbecoming gesture to be used at all in the worship of God, but only as being an irregular and unfit posture to be used at such particular times and occasions as is there spe-

* Can. 20. About the year 325.

cified,

cified, *i. e.* on the LORD's days and the feast of Pentecost. For any Christian to kneel at these times, was to act contrary to the general custom of the Church. This council, you are to observe, did not introduce and establish any new thing in the Church. They only endeavoured, by their united authority, to keep in credit and use, an ancient custom which they saw some Christians begin to neglect, and from that clause in the Canon, "Because there are some which kneel on the LORD's day, and in the days of Pentecost, &c." we may very reasonably infer that kneeling was the posture that was generally used at other times, in their religious assemblies. For if standing had been generally observed by all Churches, in time of Divine Service, at all other times as well as those mentioned in the decree, what occasion or necessity had there been for such an injunction, by which all Christians were obliged to do that which they constantly and universally did before?

There is a passage in the author of the questions and answers in Justin Martyr, which will put this matter out of doubt, and give us the reason why they altered their posture on the LORD's Day. "It is, (says he) that by
this

this means we may be put in mind both of our fall by sin, and our resurrection and restitution by the grace of CHRIST: that for six days we pray on our knees, is "in token of our fall by sin; but that we do not bow the knee on the LORD's day, doth symbolically represent our resurrection, &c*." This, he tells us, was a custom derived from the times of the Apostles, for which he cites Irenæus in his book concerning Easter.

That it was very ancient appears from Tertullian, who lived in the same age with Irenæus, *ann. dom. 198*—and speaks of it as if it had been established by apostolic authority, or at least by long and primitive custom had obtained the force of a law. His words are, "We esteem it a great wickedness, either to fast or kneel on the LORD's day †." *Die Dominico, jejunium nefas ducimus, vel de geniculis adorare.* This intimates, at the same time to us, that fasting and kneeling in their public worship, were both lawful and customary at other times.

I think the testimony of another Father, who lived *ann. dom. 390*—sometime after

* Respons. ad Quest. 115. p. 468.

† Tertull. de Cor. Mil. c. 3. p. 206. Col. Agrip. Edit. 1617.

the first general Nicene council, is sufficient to clear this matter to your perfect satisfaction. It is that of Epiphanius; in his exposition of the Catholic faith, he certifies, "That the weekly stated fasts of Wednesday and Friday were carefully kept by the Catholic Church the whole of the year, excepting the fifty days of Pentecost, on which they do not kneel, nor is there any "fast appointed*." The reason of which custom was, as both St. Jerom and St. Augustine assure us, because all that time, between Easter and Whit-Sunday, was "a time of joy and triumph †" over death and the grave. "Therefore on these days we neither fast nor bend our knees, nor incline and bow down our bodies, but with our LORD are lifted up to heaven." We pray standing all that season, "which is a sign of the resurrection." That is, by that posture, they expressed their belief of that article of faith.

From these instances we may conclude, that as the Christians of those first ages did at other times certainly fast, so they did cer-

* Epiphan. Exposit. Fid. Cathol. p. 1105. Edit. Paris.

† Hieronym. Prolog. Comment. in Ephes. Epist.—Et St. August, Epist. 119. ad Jan. c. 15.

tainly

tainly kneel at their prayers in their public assemblies at Church.

Another thing I would wish you to observe, in going along with me on the subject in question is this, that the primitive Christians were wont to receive the Holy Sacrament every day, or as often as they assembled to celebrate divine service. This custom was introduced and practised by the Apostles, as many very learned men, on scriptural authority* assert, and continued in the Church, till the days of St. Austin, who lived in the beginning of the fifth century, and seems clearly to intimate to us in his writings†, that it was customary in his days, as St. Ambrose and St. Hierom had said before him of the Churches of Milan and Rome, in their times‡.

From St. Cyprian we are fully assured that it was so in his days, about the year 250. In his explication of that petition in the LORD's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," he tells us, "That they received the Eucharist,

* AGs ii. 42, 46. and xx. 7. 1 Cor. x. 16.—Basil.—St. Ambrose, St. Hierom, &c.

† St. August. Epist. 118. ad Januar. c. 2.

‡ Vid. Dr. Cave's Primit. Christ. et St. Amb. Cap. ult. Lib. V. c. 4. de Sacrament. p. 449. Paris.—St. Hierom adversus Jovin. p. 37. Paris.—Idem in Epist. ad Lucin. Baticum, p. 71.

every

L E T T E R IX.

every day, as the food that nourished them to salvation *."

St. Basil, Bishop of Cæsaria, who lived about 370 years after CHRIST, informs us, that in his Church they communicated, "four times a week; on the LORD's day, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.†" Two of these were station days, or set days of fasting, which were punctually observed by the generality of Christians in those times. This I particularly mention, because, in all probability, since they received the sacrament on these days, they did not alter the posture of the day, but received kneeling. For if kneeling was accounted by the Church an improper posture for days of joy and festivity, such as the LORD's day, and those of Pentecost, then, by a parity of reasoning, we may conclude that standing, which was the festival posture, was not used on fasting and humiliation days, and that they who stood on fasting days were as irregular as they who kneeled on a festival.

That it was so, Tertullian gives us every reason to think from a passage in his writ-

* St. Cyprian de Orat. Dom. p. 147. Oxon Edit. 1682.—Can. 9. Apost. et Antiochen. Concil. Can. 2.

† Basil Epist. 289. ad Cæsariam, &c.

ings,

ings, "We judge it, (says he) an unlawful and impious thing either to fast or kneel at our devotions on the LORD's day. We rejoice in the same freedom and immunity from Easter to Whit-Sunday*." From this I very reasonably infer, that at all other times, when they met together at Church, especially on fast days, they used kneeling, and that at the LORD's Supper, which was administered daily in the African Church, in which Tertullian was a Presbyter†. Why else did they thus rejoice at being exempted from kneeling and fasting on the LORD's day, and from Easter to Whit-Sunday?

The last thing I would observe at present on this matter is, that the primitive Christians received the Holy Communion praying. The whole service was performed with prayer and praise. It was begun with a general prayer, and the whole congregation jointly prayed, "For the universal peace and welfare of the Church, for the tranquillity and quiet of the world, for the prosperity of the age, for healthy weather and fruitful seasons, for Kings, and Emperors, and all in autho-

* Tertull. de Orat. l. 3. p. 206. Edit. ut supra.

† St. Cyprian, ut supra.

city, &c*. The elements were sanctified by a solemn benediction, the *form* of which is in St. Ambrose†; and the whole action was concluded with prayer and thanksgiving. But that which more particularly affects the subject I am writing on is, that the Bishop or Presbyter, as the one or other administered it, always used a prayer at the delivery of the elements to every communicant, as we do, to which every one at their receiving said Amen.

The apostolic constitutions, confessed by all learned men‡ to be very ancient, though not so much so, nor so little corrupted in some things as is generally thought, give us this account, in these simple plain words. "Let the Bishop give the sacrifice or sacrament, saying, *The Body of CHRIST*; and let him that receives say, Amen! Then let the Deacon take the cup, and on delivering it say, *The Blood of CHRIST, The Cup of Life*, and let him who drinketh, say Amen§!

* Tertull. Apol. c. 39. p. 47.—St. Aug. Epist. 118.—Const. Apost. l. 2. c. 57. p. 881.—St. Chrys. Hom. 1. in 2. cap. Epist. 3 ad Tim.

† De Sacr. Lib. IV. c. 5. p. 439.—Dr. Cave's Prim. Christ. c. 11. p. 347.

‡ Mr. Daillie sets them down at the end of the fifth century.

§ Const. Apost. Lib. VIII, c. 13. p. 483.

That

That these constitutions give a true account in what they inform us with respect to the sacrament, we may rest fully satisfied from the concurring evidence of other ancient authorities, which are given us in the fourth century.

Both St. Ambrose*, and St. Cyril of Jerusalem†, make express mention of the people's saying Amen, when the Minister said "*The Body of CHRIST.*"

St. Austin also speaks of it as universally practised by the Church, when the cup was delivered‡. And Eusebius tells us in his Ecclesiastical History, that

Novatus, a Presbyter of the Church at Rome, having renounced the communion of the Church, and the authority of his Bishop, Cornelius, became a Dissenter. To secure to himself the Profelytes he had made, he altered the usual form of prayer at the sacrament, and in place of it substituted an impious oath to be taken by every communicant at the time of their receiving. His Bishop, Cornelius, himself tells us so—"When he came (says he)

* Ambros, de Sacr. Lib. IV. l. 5. p. 440. Tom. IV.

† St. Cyril. Hiero. Catech. Mystæ. 5.

‡ St. Aust. Resp. ad Quesit. 49. Tom. IV. p. 691. Basi. 1541.

to sacrifices," *i. e.* to celebrate the LORD'S Supper, "and to distribute to every person his part, at the delivery of it he constrained those persons who unhappily were his Disciples to take an oath, instead of offering up prayers and praises, according to custom; and instead of saying Amen, he forced every communicant when he received the bread, to say, I will never return to Cornelius as long as I live*."

From these several instances we may see how near our Church follows the walk of pure antiquity in the form of prayer, &c. in administering this sacrament! "The Body of our LORD JEEUS CHRIST," and "The Blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, preserve Thy Body and Soul to everlasting Life, &c." The last clause was added, in latter times, by way of explanation to that short *form* used by the primitive Church.

I hope you will pardon this long letter, and my deferring till next opportunity, the remaining part of the subject I am discussing.

I am, &c.

* Epist. Cornel. ad Fabian. apud Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. VI. cap. 35. de Novato.

LETTER X.

IN my late letter you have seen that sitting was accounted, of old, a very irreverent and improper posture in time of Divine Service. That the Holy Sacrament was esteemed the most solemn branch of Christian worship: that the primitive Church generally used standing at their public devotions, only on the LORD's days, and all the time between Easter and Whit-Sunday: at all other times kneeling was their worshipping posture, and they were wont to meet and receive the LORD's Supper every day, and particularly on their stated weekly feasts, every Wednesday and Friday. That then to stand was accounted as irregular as to kneel on the LORD's day; and lastly, that the Sacrament was delivered and received with a form of prayer, and that on those days when they always prayed kneeling.

From all these things I conclude what I asserted when I began my last letter, that in all probability, the primitive Church did kneel at the Holy Communion, as we in the Church of England do, at this day.

But be this as it will, it is most certain that they received the LORD's Supper in an adoring posture, which is the same thing, and will justify our Church as being agreeable to those of pure antiquity.

This I prove from both the Greek and Latin Fathers. I begin with the Greek.

The testimony of St. Cyril is unexceptionable; and nothing can be more plain and express to our purpose. This venerable Father, in a place I cited in my last letter, instructs communicants how to behave themselves when they approach the LORD's table, and also in the act of receiving both the bread and the wine. At the receiving the cup he says, Κυπῶν καὶ τροπῶ, προσ κύνησεως καὶ σεβασματος λεγων τὸ Ἄμην — “ Approach not rudely stretching forth thy hands, but bowing thyself, and in a posture of worship and adoration, saying Amen * !”

* St. Cyril, Hierosol. Mystag. Catech. 5. versus finem. Edit. Paris.

St. Chrysostom speaks to the same purpose in his 24th Homily on First Epistle to the Corinthians, where he excites the Christians of his time, to an awful and reverential deportment, at the Holy Communion, in imitation of the example given them by the Magi, or wise men, who adored our SAVIOUR in his infancy. He says, "This Body the wise men revered even when it lay in the manger; and approaching towards it they worshipped it with fear and trembling. Let us therefore, citizens of heaven, imitate at least these barbarians. But thou seest this Body, not in the manger, but on the altar, not held by a woman, but by the priest, &c. Let us, therefore, stir up ourselves, and be horribly afraid, and manifest a much greater reverence than those barbarians, lest coming lightly, and at a venture, we heap fire on our heads."

Διανασήσωμεν τοίνυν ἑαυτοὺς καὶ φρίξωμεν, &c*.

In another place †, St. Chrysostom expressly desires the communicants to "fall down and communicate, ἀνάπεσον, καὶ μετέχε.".

Theodoret, who lived in 440, concurs with the testimony of those ancient fathers. In a

* 24 Hom. Epist. ad Corinth. p. 538. Tom. IX. Paris.

† St. Chrysost. Hom. 3. in Epist. ad Ephes. in Moral. p. 1151.

dialogue of his composition between an orthodox Christian and an heretic, he introduces Orthodoxus thus discoursing concerning the LORD's Supper. The mysterious symbols, or signs in the sacrament, that is, the bread and wine, depart not from their proper nature, for they abide in their former essence, and retain their former shape and form, and they prove themselves both to our sight and touch to be what they were before, "But they are considered for such as they are made, by consecration, and are believed and adored as those very things which they are believed to be—*Νοῦνται δὲ ὅπερ ἐγένετο καὶ πιστεύεται, καὶ προσκυνεῖται ὡς ἐκείνα ὕμνα, ὅπερ πιστεύεται* *." In these words we may remark, that there is a posture of adoration to be used in receiving the elements of the LORD's Supper. But will the Dissenters presume to say of Theodoret, as of us, that, by this attitude in the act of communicating, there is Idolatry, Popery, and I do not know what bad things in our minds? Poor ignorant, obstinate Pharisees!

I shall only add two evidences from the Latin Church, but both very eminent Fathers.

* Dialog. II. Tom. IV. p. 85. Paris Edit.

The first is St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan. In a book he wrote *De Spiritu Sancto*, in which he enquires into the meaning of the Psalmist, when he exhorts men to exalt the LORD, and to worship his foot-stool; and he gives us the sense in these words: that it seems to belong to the mystery of our LORD's incarnation; and after shewing his reasons for accommodating it to that mystery, he concludes thus: "By the foot-stool, therefore, is the earth to be understood, and by the earth the Body of CHRIST, which, at this day, we adore in the sacrament, and which the Apostles worshipped in the LORD JESUS. *Itaque, per Scabellum, Terra intelligitur, per Terram autem caro Christi, quam hodie quoque in mysteriis adoramus, et quam Apostoli in Domino Jesu adorant* *."

St. Austin, Bishop of Hippo, comments on the same words, and to the same purpose. For thus he resolves that question; how or in what sense the earth, his foot-stool, may be worshipped without impiety? "Because he took earth of the earth; for flesh is of the earth, and he took flesh of the flesh of Mary: and because

* Psal. xcvi. Ps. xcix. 5. in our translation. Ambros. de Sanct. Sp. Lib. III. c. 12.

he conversed here in the flesh, and gave us his very flesh to eat for our salvation; now there is none who eateth that flesh but first worshippeth. We have found then how his foot-stool may be adored, so that we are so far from sinning by adoring, that we really sin if we do not adore." *Nemo carnem illam manducat, nisi prius adoraverit, &c.*

In the judgment, you see, of these primitive Bishops, we may lawfully adore at the mysteries, though not the mysteries themselves; at the sacraments, not the sacraments themselves; the CREATOR in the Creature, which is sanctified, not the Creature in itself; as a late Protestant French writer very justly distinguishes, on the above words of St. Ambrose*.

From these few instances I have sent you, it is very evident that the primitive Christians always made use of an adoring posture in the act of receiving the Sacrament, and that therefore the practice of our Church is sufficiently justified as agreeable to the customs and practice of antiquity, long before the epithet of Popish was in any language.

* Phil. Mornay du Plessis, de Missa, Lib. IV. c. 7. p. 732.

But

But can the Dissenters say as much for sitting? They unanimously agree that kneeling was introduced by the man of sin—by Antichrist—and after transubstantiation sprung up—and in the time of Honorius the Third. I have proved the latter part of this assertion false, and now I shall prove that the Church of Rome never desired communicants to kneel in the act of receiving, and that so far is the Pope from kneeling himself, that he sits, as the Dissenters do, at the LORD's Supper.

I will appeal for the truth of my assertion, that neither the Pope nor the Church of Rome ever enjoined kneeling to their votaries, to Mr. Prynne, once of Lincoln's Inn, a great enemy to kneeling, and, as my author says, as good a terrier as ever lived. "There is not one Canon to be found, he says, made by any General, National, Provincial, Council or Synod, from CHRIST's institution of the LORD's Supper, till above 1460 years after his ascension: nor any rubric in all the Liturgies, writings of the Fathers, or Missals, Breviaries, Offices, Pontificals, Ceremonials of the Church of Rome itself, that I could either find upon my best search, or any other yet produce, enjoining communicants to kneel in
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the act of receiving*." This report of his he strengthens with the authority of a clergyman whom he accounts the most eminent champion for the gesture of kneeling of all others. It was Dr. Burgefs who says, "that kneeling, in the act of receiving, was never any instituted ceremony of the Church of Rome†." For this he cites Bellarmin and Durantus, who make no mention of kneeling in the act of receiving, though they treat particularly of the Mass, and the ceremonies of the Roman Church. Instead of this, Durantus affirms, "that the Sacrament ought to be taken standing," and he proves it too, "and so doth the Pope himself receive it sometimes, when he celebrates. And every priest, by order of the Mass-book, is to partake standing reverently at the altar, and not kneeling there‡."

The people which receive not, in the Church of Rome, as well as they who do receive, are reverently to bow themselves to the Sacrament, not when they receive it, but when the Priest doth elevate the Patin or Chalice

* Mr. Prynne's Apol. for Lib. to tender Consec. printed 1662.

† Dr. Burgefs Answer Rejoy. to Dr. Mort. Reply, &c.

‡ Missal. Rom. in the Rubric, published by order of Pius V.

for adoration, or when the Host is carried to any sick person, or in procession. And this is that adoration which was first brought in by Pope Honorius III. and not any kneeling or adoration in the act of receiving, as our Dissenters are taught to believe. For these are the very words of the decree, "That the Priests should frequently instruct their people to bow themselves with reverence at the elevation of the Host, when Mass was celebrated, and in like manner when the Priest carried it abroad to the sick—*Ut Sacerdotes frequenter doceant Plebem suam, ut cum elevatur Hostia Salutaris, quisque se reverenter inclinet, idem faciens quum eam deferat Presbyter ad infirmum* *." Dr. Burgefs therefore, aware of these circumstances, at last resolves thus upon the question: "That kneeling, in the act of receiving, was never any instituted ceremony of the Church of Rome, nor ever used, when it was used by them, for adoration to the Sacrament, as is falsely believed and talked of by many." And, with him, a learned Papist agrees, who in a book purposely wrote for the adoration of the Sacrament says, "It is not very material in what gesture it is performed, whether sit-

* Decret. Greg. L. 3. tit. 41. c. 10.

ting,

ting, standing, lying or kneeling ;” and at the same time informs us, that, “ kneeling had not been practised in the Church of Lyons in 1555 ;” and when some people exerted themselves to introduce it into that city, a stop was put to it by Royal authority* .

Add to these particulars, what a very great man of our Church assures us of—what travellers confirm for truth, and what no Dissenter of intelligence will presume to deny. “ The Pope himself receives the Sacrament sitting,” as the Dissenters do ; and, not as they say, kneeling, in the manner we do, and for which they so ignorantly and so basely traduce us. “ For, although kneeling, at the elevation of the Host, be strictly required by the Roman Church, yet in the act of receiving it is not. This manifestly appears by the Pope’s manner of receiving, which is not kneeling, but either sitting, as it was in Bonaventure’s time, or after the fashion of sitting, or a little leaning upon his throne, as he does, at this day † .” We have seen before, that he stands when he personally celebrates Mass, but generally and ordinarily the Pope certainly sits at the Holy

* Esendæus de Ador. Euch. Lib. II. c. 16.

† Archbp. Tillotson—Vid. Unreasonableness of Separation, p. 15.

Communion.—What Dissenter can deny this? And now, pray what a fine pass are the railers against the Church of England brought at last to! They have long bawled out in their pulpits, and from the press, against our kneeling at the Sacrament, as a gesture introduced by Antichrist, a Popish ceremony, an act of Idolatry, and yet when the matter comes to be examined, there is not a single proof of this being the case, but on the contrary, the very two postures which our Dissenters plead so outrageously for, and the very one which they always use, are the very same postures which The Man of Sin uses, at this moment, in the act of receiving the Holy Sacrament*. And, if we believe a learned Doctor in the Church of Rome, the Pope uses sitting for the same reason which our Dissenters give us, *i. e.* “because the Apostles sat, at the first institution and celebration of the Sacrament.” *Si quæretur quare Dominus Papa sedendo communicat, potest dici, quod hoc sit in recordationem, quod Beatus Petrus et alii Apostoli sedendo Corpus Domini in Cæna ultima acceperunt.* “If any person inquire why the Pope receives sitting, it may be replied, he useth that gesture in remembrance

* Vid. Dr. Falkner, Lib. Eccles. p. 484, 485.

of St. Peter and the other Apostles who received the Body of our LORD, at the last Supper, sitting*.

Another account of the posture of sitting we have from a decree made against it by A General Synod of the Reformed Churches in Poland, &c. Ann. Dom. 1578. "Forasmuch as sitting was introduced by the Arians, contrary to the custom used by all the Evangelical Churches in Europe, we reject it, as peculiar to them who, as they irreverently treat CHRIST, so also his sacred appointments, and as a ceremony *less comely and devout, and to many very offensive*†."

I hope you are now convinced that kneeling in the act of receiving, is not what the Dissenters call it—that, in observing this gesture, you transgress no law of GOD: you do not act contrary to our SAVIOUR's example: you do nothing but what becomes every good subject and every good Christian to do: nothing but what is very suitable to the nature of the LORD's Supper, and very agreeable to the practice of the universal Church in the first and purest ages. I am quite fatigued with

* Alex. Hales Tract. de Missa. par. 2. quest. 10. par. 4.

† Synod. Petricov. Conclus. 4.

writing;

writing; but, before I lay down my pen, allow me to observe how ridiculous the conduct of our Dissenters has been in all they have wrote or said on this subject. To-day, they fly to the command of CHRIST, for refuge in argument; to-morrow, they plead from his example: when beat out of that, then they run to a metaphysical battery of natural rights—liberty of conscience—civil customs, and the nature of the thing—and back again to the example argument.—I have now seated them with his holiness the Pope; and there I leave them to conclude, for your further instruction, with the famous Non-conformist, Baxter's Sentiments on the subject of my Letter.

“ For kneeling (says he) I never yet heard any thing to prove it unlawful. If there be any thing, it must be either some Word of God, or the nature of the ordinance which is supposed to be contradicted. But, first, there is no Word of God for any gesture nor against any. CHRIST's example can never be proved to oblige us more in this than in many other circumstances that are confessed not obligatory. As, that he delivered but to ministers, and but to a family of twelve—and after supper

per—and on a Thursday-night—and in an upper room, &c. and his gesture was not such a sitting as ours. And, second, for the nature of the ordinance, it is mixed: and if it be lawful to take a pardon from the King upon our knees, I know not what can make it unlawful to take a sealed pardon from CHRIST, by his Ambassador upon our knees. * ”

If I find you approve of the ten letters I have sent you, it will please me much that I have devoted any of my leisure hours to such a good purpose, as to give you satisfaction; or, in any thing I can serve you, to gain the honour of your approbation. I remain, very sincerely,

My dear Sir,

Your's, &c.

* Mr. Baxter's Christian Directory—par. 2. p. 111. quest. 3, sect. 40.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.